AMONG THIS WEEK'S CONTRIBUTORS

Gerald Abraham's *Essays on Russian and East European Music* was published earlier this year.

Michael Aris's books include *Bhutan: The early history of a Himalayan kingdom*, 1979.

John Barnard's edition of Etherege's *The Man of Mode* was published in 1979.

Gordon Brotherston's books include *The Emergence of the Latin American Novel*, 1978.

Anne Chisholm's biography of Nancy Cunard was published in 1980.

Stephen R. L. Clark is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Liverpool.

Alexander Cockburn is a columnist for the *Nation*, the *Wall Street Journal* and *Atlantic Monthly*.

David Coward is a lecturer in French at the University of Leeds.

Michael Davie was the Editor of the *Melbourne Age* from 1979 to 1981.

Christopher de Hamel's *Glossed Books of the Bible and the Origins of the Paris Booktrade* will shortly be reviewed in the *TLS*.

Filippo Donini was formerly Director of the Italian Institute in London.

Mark Dowie is Investigative Editor of the periodical *Mother Jones*.

Katherine Duncan-Jones's edition of Sidney's *Old Arcadia* has recently been published.

C. J. Dunn was Professor of Japanese at the University of London from 1970 to 1982.

Patrick Enfield is a lecturer in Philosophy at Trinity College, Dublin.

John L. Flood is Director of the Institute of Germanic Studies at the University of London.

Celina Fox is Keeper of Paintings, Prints and Drawings at the Museum of London.

Richard Gombrich is Boden Professor of Sanskrit at the University of Oxford.

Max Hastings is the author of *Overlord: D-Day and the battle for Normandy 1944*, 1984.

Matthew Hodgart's *James Joyce: A student's guide* was published in 1978.

H. Stuart Hughes's most recent book is *Prisoners of Hope: The silver age of the Italian Jews 1924–1974*, 1983.

Sir David Hunt is the editor of *Footprints in Cyprus: An illustrated history*, 1982.

P. D. James's crime novels include *The Skull Beneath the Skin*, 1982.

R. W. Johnson teaches Politics at Magdalen College, Oxford.

Peter Keating's *The Victorian Prophets: A reader from Carlyle to H. G. Wells* was published in 1981.

James Kirkup teaches at Kyoto University of Foreign Studies.

Kenneth Kitchen is Reader in Egyptology and Coptic at the University of Liverpool.

Patrick McCarthy is the author of *Camus: A critical study of his life and work*, 1982.

Rosamond McKitterick is a Fellow of Newham College, Cambridge.

Sir John Mason is Director General of the Meteorological Office.

Margaret Meek is co-editor with Jane Miller of *Changing English: Essays for Harold Rosen*, 1984.

Kenneth O. Morgan's *Labour in Power, 1945–1951* was published last year.

Stephanie Nettell is children's book's editor for the *Guardian*.

Neil Philip's *A Fine Anger: A critical introduction to the work of Alan Garner* was published in 1981.

Claude Rawson's *Order from Confusion Sprung: Studies in 18th Century Literature* will be published later this year.

Piers Paul Read's novels include *A Married Man*, 1979.

Peter Reading's most recent collection of poems, *C*, appeared last year.

Lorna Sage is a lecturer in English and American Studies at the University of East Anglia.

Miranda Seymour is currently working on a life of Henry James.

A. W. B. Simpson is Professor of Law at the University of Kent at Canterbury.

George Steiner's most recent book is *Antigones*, 1984.

Matthew Sweeney's collection of poems *A Round House* was published in 1983.

Tony Thomas is Business Editor of *The Economist*.

Ann Thwaite's biography of Frances Hodgson Burnett was published in 1974.

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Last peak of the Gothic Revival

Mark Girouard

DAVID B. BROWNLEE
The Law Courts: The architecture of George Edmund Street
430pp. MIT Press. £41.25.
0 262 02199 4

Walking through the great hall of the London Law Courts, one occasionally has the pleasing experience of watching leaping lawyers as they play badminton on its interminable expanses of mosaic floor. They have all the space in the world to do so, for the hall has no other use except as a passageway, and not all that busy a passageway at that. A hundred years ago, when the ordinary public were not allowed into the hall at all, it was even less frequented. David B. Brownlee quotes a verse published in *Punch* in 1893:

That thing of beauty was meant to be
For ever a joy
Just built to accommodate, as we see
One messenger boy.

The mystery of the unnecessary hall must puzzle anyone who ever penetrates the Law Courts. If not solved, it is at least illuminated by Brownlee in as thorough, readable and richly documented a study as any major Victorian building has received. Its title is a little misleading, as it is only marginally concerned with the other architecture of George Edmund Street in so far as it relates to the Law Courts; and it is about more than Street's Law Courts, for it includes a full and interesting section on the other entries in the original competition of 1866–7.

The main reason why the hall is there is because in 1823–6 the previous law courts had been constructed to the design of John Soane along one side of Westminster Hall, which was, of course, even larger. For at least the next hundred years a grand hall was considered an essential adjunct of all Law Courts. But Westminister Hall was originally not an adjunct: it actually was the Law Courts. Up till the end of the eighteenth century, the courts of the King's Bench, the Court of Chancery and the Court of Common Pleas all sat in different wooden pens in different corners of it. In between were stalls selling books, millinery, instruments and toys, and the body of the hall was thronged with people who had come to shop, to watch the courts or merely to pass the time of day. In 1820 all this was cleared out for the other traditional function of the hall, a coronation banquet – as it turned out, the last one to be held. The disturbance involved provided the impetus for moving the courts into new buildings, and the hall, with shops and courts removed, became a huge vestibule for Parliament and Soane's Law Courts. It impressively symbolized the majesty of the two institutions but its only remaining practical function was as a meeting-place for lawyers and their clients.

The accommodation provided by Soane's Law Courts was still felt by the legal profession to be inadequate, and in addition there was a growing campaign to fuse the two varieties of English law, equity (based in and around Lincoln's Inn) and common law (based in Westminster Hall), into one building. As part of the campaign, in 1840 Charles Barry was commissioned by the Incorporated Law Society to prepare designs for a model combined Law Courts on Lincoln's Inn Fields. There was never any likelihood that this would be built, but, as Brownlee establishes, it was the prototype which conditioned the whole Law Courts competition of 1867. The building was planned concentrically round a great central public hall, the contemporary equivalent of Westminster Hall. Round this were the courts, and round the back of the courts was a private corridor for judges and barristers, giving them access both to the courts and to their own rooms.

The influence of this dignified plan is very evident in the Law Courts as finally built. But some odd things have happened to it. The central hall is still there, but it is one storey below the level of the courts, and only has access to them by way of corridors and staircases. And the two circulation systems of Barry's building, for the public and the law, have become no less than five, each with its own entrances, corridors and staircases: for judges; for barristers and their clients; for solicitors; for witnesses; and for the ordinary public. Of these only the witnesses actually had to use the hall, the main practical purpose of which was to serve as a corridor for them; but barristers could use it as an alternative to their normal route of access to the courts, and could also emerge from their own corridor on to balconies overlooking it, if they felt like a change of view. Barristers consulted with clients in special consultation rooms or the first-floor corridors, rather than the hall. The general public were confined to staircases on the edge of the building complex, and to dark passages leading to the spectators' galleries in the courts.

Brownlee characterizes this plan as one of "pragmatic imperiousness", but it is hard to see why. It seems more like a conscientious attempt by an architect who had no gift for planning complex buildings to deal with an impossible brief. The circulation system derived from the Victorian passion for classification and separation, on moral, social or functional grounds, other examples of which are the dozen or more bars originally to be found in many Victorian pubs, or the bachelors' stairs, menservants' stairs, women-servants' stairs, family stairs, main stairs, back stairs, and attendant front and back passages and specialized rooms of Victorian country houses. It was an attitude to planning which inevitably produced problems of lighting, which in the Law Courts were made virtually insoluble by the insertion of the useless hall like a cuckoo into a nest which was anyway scarcely large enough for the accommodation which it had to contain. Everything else suffers as a result: there is a proliferation of light wells glazed with white tiles; the barristers' corridors outside the courts, which are the main arteries of the building and need to be broad and light, are dark and relatively narrow, and have a depressing outlook across tiny courts to the blank walls of the great hall. The only way to have got round this, and to have retained the hall, would have been to make it a glazed arcade or courtyard, bringing light to the spaces round it instead of taking their light away. Waterhouse had done this, in his competition designs, but had been much criticized. The result was thought to look too much like a railway station or an exhibition hall; it lacked dignity. The alternative, of omitting the hall altogether, and replacing it by a very broad corridor serving the courts around a well-lit central court, was used by Scott in his competition design, but Street never seems to have contemplated it.

The circulation system derived from the original brief, but the hall did not. Both Street and the lawyers wanted a hall, however: the lawyers either because they were used to one or as a status symbol, Street because it was the one great architectural interior for which the commission gave scope. But in Street's original design the hall was on the same level as the courts, and much more closely related to them; it was the lawyers who asked for it to be dropped a storey lower. Brownlee does not explain why they did so; and, in general, although he is interesting and informative about the legal background, it would have been interesting to be told a little more about the practical legal problems of the day. Was there any practical reason, other than status, for segregating lawyers on the move from judges on the move? What caused the fanatical insistence on penning in the general public, who today are freely allowed into both the hall and the main corridors? Does Street's reference to "the filthy public" supply the answer?

What *The Law Courts* does most excellently is to provide a full account of the events leading up to the competition, the competition itself, the politics and personalities behind it, the trials which Street had to undergo once the commission had been given to him, and the changing attitudes to design expressed in the numerous different schemes which he was compelled to produce.

The competition was as ineptly run, and produced as much aggravation, as most competitions. It was set up by a special Royal Commission, mainly composed of lawyers, but the building was built and paid for by the government. The Royal Commission chose the competitors and the assessors, and encouraged the former to make designs based on a site bigger than the government was prepared to pay for. They failed to choose a single winner, and instead selected a pair, Street for his design and E. M. Barry for his planning. The government refused to accept this, and knocked out Barry, who spent the rest of his life attacking Street and campaigning against the decision. Street made five sets of detailed designs, and several variants in between: the original competition design, an improved design on the same site, a new design for a new site on the Embankment, and two designs for the final site, which was based on the original one, but was considerably smaller. Street was constantly badgered as a result of changes of plan or economy campaigns on the part of changing governments. He was an architect who himself designed his buildings down to the smallest detail, and the energy which he put into making drawings, supervising the building and negotiating with politicians and civil servants was phenomenal. In fact it killed him. He died in 1881, a year before the Law Courts were opened, aged fifty-seven. The embittered E. M. Barry had already dropped dead at a Royal Academy Council meeting, aged fifty.

The competition entries had previously been the subject of an excellent article by Michael Port, published in the 1968 volume of *Architectural History*. But Brownlee's account is much more comprehensive and more fully illustrated. The entries provide a fascinating record of the nuances and capabilities of the English Gothic Revival in the 1860s. The com-

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Cambridge University Press
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petition has in fact been generally and reasonably recognized as marking the Revival's peak, and correspondingly the beginning of its decline. Charles Barry's 1840–41 design had been a classical one, but nine of the eleven competitors finally chosen were Gothicists, and even the two classicists produced Gothic designs. The Gothicists had been campaigning since the 1830s to establish Gothic as the lingua franca of architecture, and had been spreading out from their original base of Gothic churches to capture commissions for Gothic schools, hospitals, factories, pumping stations, water-towers, market-halls, clubs and offices. The fact that Gothic swept the board in the competition was triumphantly acclaimed; total victory was at last in sight. But when Street's building was opened in 1882 it received a lukewarm welcome, and by then the great days of the Gothic Revival were clearly over.

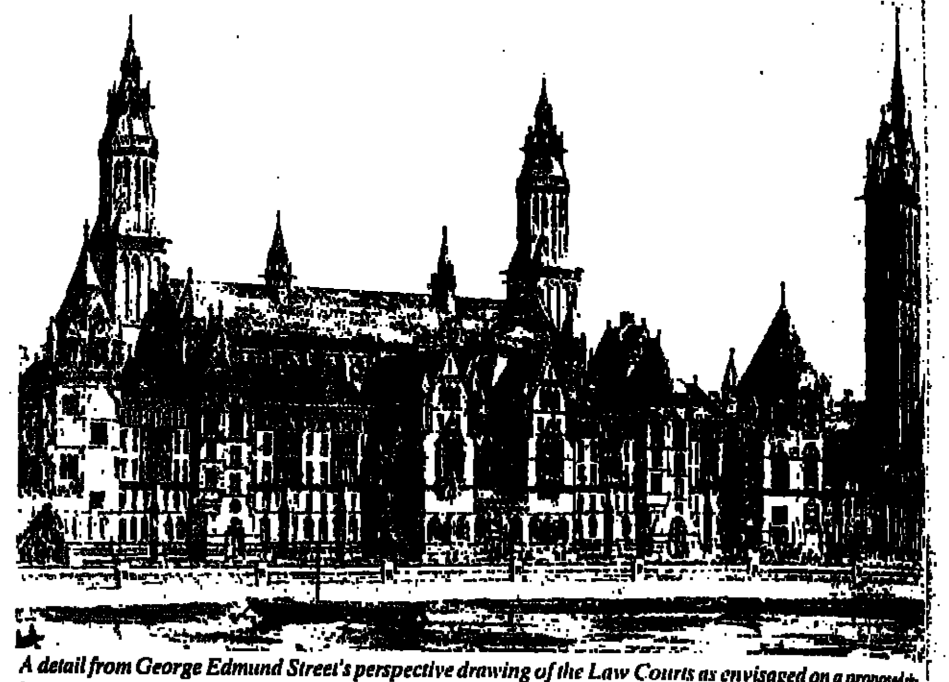
The combined competition entries present a wonderful array of vaulted halls and towered skylines, combined with planning which is more often inept than competent. Visually, the most sensational entries were Burges's for the exterior and Waterhouse's for the interior. Burges's enfilade of soaring towers (at least a dozen, including one giant) was put across in brilliant drawings which had the same effect on young architects of the day as Swinburne's poems on young readers; and they still take the breath away. Waterhouse designed two great halls, in the form of long arcades or galleries, one at high level and one at lower level, crossing each other at right angles in the centre; the upper gallery was lit by a glass and iron roof and opened out through arcades, windows and staircases into the surrounding building.

But externally Waterhouses's architecture was not nearly as impressive as Street's. Street's drawings are wonderful ones, quite without the flamboyance of Burges, but expressing total control and a white heat of conviction canalized by a steely precision of execution. As much as any architect of the day he thought in Gothic; he never copied. He could never bring himself to use glass and iron in the way that Waterhouse and Scott did, because it seemed to him against the essential nature of Gothic.

Even so, within strict limits, he was prepared to adapt elements from other styles. Brownlee quotes a sentence of his, written in 1852: "That architecture is best which best combines the verticality of Pointed with the repose of classic architecture." His competition design epitomizes this, and presented an exquisite contrast between the soaring verticals of the great tower and the horizontal line of eaves and roofs carried at the same height right round the building.

One can still sense this quality in the Law Courts as built, especially in the noble simplicity of the west front, which no one ever looks at. But much of the rest of the building shows a somewhat different approach from that of the competition drawings; the grouping is more complex and picturesque, especially on the Strand front, where the main façade is broken through to provide a dramatic entrance into the great hall. Brownlee is probably right in seeing the change as resulting from Street's being influenced by the success among other architects of Burges's undoubtedly picturesque designs, and a general stylistic move back to the picturesque and away from the simpler massing of the mid-century. He is less convincing in the frequency with which he couples "Gothic" with "picturesque", as though to suggest that the latter is an intrinsic quality of the former. The picturesque was an eighteenth-century concept, and led to an approach to design which was still powerful in the nineteenth century. The picturesque qualities of some medieval buildings were not the result of any deliberate intent on the part of their builders, to whom the concept would have been meaningless. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries classical buildings as well as Gothic ones could be designed to be picturesque.

As an end result the Law Courts are full of



A detail from George Edmund Street's perspective drawing of the Law Courts as envisaged on a proposed site between Howard Street and the Embankment (May 1869); it is reproduced from the book reviewed here.

good things: wonderful ironwork, detail of noble but endlessly varied simplicity, amazingly inventive staircases (surprisingly, not illustrated by Brownlee) a main façade which is a textbook lesson in how to make a grand building effective on a relatively narrow street. But as a whole they are a failure, due less to any basic impossibility of making a convenient nineteenth-century building out of a language of structure and ornament derived from the fourteenth century than to the fact that they are based on an inept plan, ineptly lit, and sacrifice too much to a relatively meaningless status symbol. The tepid reception they received was due partly to their own failings, partly to the fact that by the 1880s the heat had gone out of the Gothic Revival. It is a mistake to read too deep a significance into its decline. The circumstances under which medieval Gothic had flourished for over 300 years could never be repeated. The Gothic Revival, like the Modern Movement, dominated the architectural scene for about thirty years. Its subsequent decline was due more to fashion than to any inherent weakness. Both architects and public were bored and wanted a change.

Victorian Building Regulations: Summary tables of the principal English Building Acts and Model By-laws 1840–1914 (137pp. Mansell. £20. 0 7201 1751 8) by Roger H. Harper is designed to show, through tables, drawings and diagrams, regulations governing particular aspects of building design and construction evolved from preceding legislation and how they subsequently developed: included are a bibliography and a glossary of technical terms no longer in current use.

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Constructive comments

David Watkin

JOHN NEWMAN (Editor)
Design and Practice in British Architecture:
Studies in architectural history presented to Howard Colvin
601pp. Society of Architectural Historians of Great Britain; distributed by Zwemmer. £25.

Howard Colvin's standing as a scholar of enormous distinction, coupled with the breadth of his influence and his generosity in sharing the fruits of his research with historians of all ages, make him the most appropriate recipient possible of a Festschrift. His magisterial *Biographical Dictionary of British Architects, 1600–1840* (1978) is a volume so fundamental to architectural scholarship that anyone working seriously in the broad field it covers will need to have almost daily recourse to it. First published in 1954 as *A Biographical Dictionary of English Architects, 1660–1840*, it is the result of such tremendous industry, involving such extensive archival research and first-hand inspection of buildings, that it seems scarcely credible as the work of one man, especially since Colvin is first a medieval historian rather than an architectural historian. It is more like the product of a team of full-time scholars working over a long period, except that it has what such an undertaking would lack: consistency of intellectual and aesthetic judgment and gem-like clarity of language.

To mark Colvin's sixty-fifth birthday, John Newman of the Courtauld Institute of Art has willingly undertaken the tremendous labour of editing a volume consisting of essays by over fifty architectural historians. This is published both as a book to be sold in its own right and also as Volume 27 of *Architectural History*, the journal of the Society of Architectural Historians of Great Britain. This dual role was a happy idea since it gives the book a practical as well as a celebratory function.

It opens with a bibliography of Colvin's published writings, excluding book reviews, from 1938 to 1983. The absence of anything as fulsome as a biography of Colvin or a description of his achievement is in accordance with his own modesty of manner and appearance, though the frontispiece is a photograph of him, taken for *House and Garden*, cosily tucked into a Parker Knoll armchair with a pretty book on French medieval sculpture on his knee. The essays in his Festschrift are divided under seven headings covering areas in which he has himself made important contributions to knowledge: "Royal Works and Office of Works", "London", "Stuart and Georgian Country Houses", "Architecture and its Organization in the Provinces", "Contributions to Architectural Biography", "Miscellany of Building Types and Some Definitions" (a rather desperately titled section) and "Recording and Criticism". The authors include Sir John Summerson, Dorothy Stroud, Mark Girouard, John Harris, J. Mordaunt Crook and Kerry Downes, but there are numerous contributions from younger scholars such as Tim Mowle, Ian Gow, David Brock and Roger White. Architects covered by essays include Wren, Winde, Burlington, Kent, Adam, Pickford of Derby, Wyatt, Soane, Pugin and Arthur Bolton. There are essays on individual houses such as Badminton, Hopetoun, Crichel and Mount Clare, Roehampton; on planning-types such as sixteenth-century Scottish royal palaces, the long gallery and the lobby-entry house; and on building-types like castle gates and garden gates, and park gate lodges. The extraordinary variety of topics ranges from Bridget Cherry's essay on "An early sixteenth-century London tomb design", via Peter Willis on "Capability Brown's account with Drummond's Bank", to Juliet Allan on "The throne in the House of Lords and its setting".

Two essays which particularly remain in the mind are R. A. Beddard's on "Wren's Mausoleum for Charles I and the cult of the royal martyr" and Summerson's on "The Evolution of Soane's Bank Stock Office at the Bank of England". Faultlessly edited, with numerous clearly reproduced illustrations, this massive book must find a place in every serious library.

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Bergin & Garvey Publishers
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Battling against bigness

Shirley Robin Letwin

PHILIPPA STRUM
Louis D. Brandeis: Justice for the people
508pp. Harvard University Press. £22.
0 674 53921 4

Between the January and March of 1916, while Europe was fighting the First World War, headlines in the United States were devoted to an uproar over a nomination to the Supreme Court. President Wilson had proposed a renowned Boston lawyer, Louis Dembitz Brandeis, and a campaign was mounted to stop the appointment. It was charged against Brandeis that he lacked a judicial temperament and had been guilty of unprofessional conduct as a lawyer. The defence, orchestrated by Brandeis himself, replied that this wildly implausible charge was motivated by rancour against his radical opinions: he had defended trade unionism, attacked corporations and advocated legislation for minimum wages, maximum working hours and government regulation of utilities. He had joined the Progressive League formed by Senator La Follette, who had advised Wilson to make the appointment.

Although it was also suggested that some part of the antagonism to Brandeis was due to feelings against introducing a Jew into the Supreme Court, prominent Jews, Boston Brahmins and Harvard presidents appeared on both sides at the Senate hearings. Whether in the end the outcome was determined by the evidence presented or by political sympathies remains unclear, but Brandeis was confirmed and served with great distinction until he resigned in 1939, two years before his death. He has since had a university named after him and been celebrated in many biographies as a hero of both law and justice. Philippa Strum's book adds to the chorus of praise. What is new are the many details that she provides about Brandeis's development.

He came of a prosperous and highly cultivated German-speaking Jewish family, who decided to leave their home in Bohemia after the events of 1848. With their grand pianos and elegant wardrobes, they moved first to Cincinnati and finally to Louisville, Kentucky, where they set up a successful trade in grain and produce. Louis, born in 1856, the youngest of four children, was educated in Louisville schools, where he studied Latin, Greek, French, German, mathematics, history and chemistry. Upon graduating, he spent three years traveling with his family in Europe and studying in Vienna and Dresden before entering the Harvard Law School at the age of nineteen.

His teachers were all astounded by his brilliance. But otherwise the story of his life is very much that of a typical American hero. He had difficulties with health, which he overcame by a strict régime of rest and exercise, especially riding and boating. Receiving no financial help from his family, whose business had by then deteriorated, he scraped his way through Harvard by frugality, borrowing, scholarships and his own earnings. That all changed after he went into practice, and by forty he had acquired the then massive fortune of two million dollars. His habit of frugality remained, however, for the rest of his life and made visiting Brandeis at home an austere experience; but it allowed him to give generously of time and money to friends and organizations, so that he became a leading public figure.

Professor Strum emphasizes repeatedly that Brandeis believed in the traditional American ideal of a decentralized democracy based on private property and competition, and that he feared above all the evils of "bigness". His belief in portable pensions, profit sharing and workers' and consumers' co-operatives is all compatible with that view. Even his enthusiasm about enrolling all workers in trade unions might be attributed to a hope that unions would offset the power of big corporations. But his role in Roosevelt's New Deal suggests opinions of another sort.

Brandeis was not merely a dreamer but drew up a detailed practical programme for the New Deal. This relied heavily on the use of federal taxing power "to end the practices and institutions taxed". Not only did Brandeis wish to discourage corporations, interlocking directorships, holding companies and chain stores, he also wanted the government to subsidize industry and agriculture, control water supplies, undertake slum clearance and afforestation, provide adult education and recreation facilities, and accumulate and disseminate information. In short, he advocated huge public works, to be paid for by heavy taxation. All this makes it easy to agree with Strum when she keeps reminding us that, despite his love of competition, "Brandeis was not advocating a return to nineteenth century laissez-faire economics". But although she acknowledges that the New Deal established the "big government" that Brandeis opposed, she does not find it strange that he should have lauded Roosevelt for being "greater than Jefferson and almost as great as Lincoln". To others, Strum's account of Brandeis's political opinions suggests that he was committed to incompatible aspirations.

That is certainly true of his views about adjudication. Some of his assertions bear out Strum's description of him as an advocate of "judicial restraint" who opposed using adjudication to change the policies established by the legislators. But Brandeis also maintained the opposite, that judges should not reason from what the law *does* mean but should concentrate on finding out what the law *should* mean in order to satisfy "the felt necessities of the moment". Along with Justice Holmes and Roscoe Pound, Dean of the Harvard Law School, Brandeis was a founder of "sociological jurisprudence", the doctrine that judicial decisions should be determined not by adherence to legal precedent but by attention to social need as established by sociological facts.

Brandeis first promoted this doctrine when he introduced what has become known as "the Brandeis brief" in *Muller v Oregon* (1908), where he was defending the constitutionality of a state law that limited the working hours of women. Only two pages of his brief were devoted to legal precedents; the rest, over a hundred pages, presented evidence to establish the harmful effects on women of working long hours. In a later brief, he advanced a thousand pages of statistics. This was the sort of brief required if, as Brandeis urged, the courts were not to proceed "deductively from preconceived notions and conclusions" but were to adopt Brandeis's method – "inductive reasoning from the facts".

Through his decisions, his law clerks, and his influence on appointments in the Harvard Law School and elsewhere, Brandeis helped to populate American courts with advocates and judges who had been taught that "current law, in order to be relevant and legitimate, first had to be responsible to current social facts", that the facts can always be construed so as to require whatever kind of government intervention is at issue, and that something in the Constitution could always be found to "legitimize" whatever law might be wanted to establish such intervention. This is hardly a doctrine of judicial restraint, nor is it likely to discourage "big government". Nevertheless, Strum concludes that all those who "consider the law to be a dynamic entity" will welcome the influence of Brandeis's sociological jurisprudence.

Much the same pattern emerged in his devotion to Zionism. Strum gives a colourful account of how it began, when he first encountered Eastern Jews in the course of arbitrating for the garment workers' strike of 1912. Becoming acquainted with the garment workers, she says, made him aware of "the Jewishness that he shared with people he had considered alien". He came to see Jews as bearers of remarkable spiritual and intellectual qualities which would vanish if they disappeared as a distinctive people. And he learnt that Jews suffered from antisemitism even in the United States. As a result of reading Alfred Zimmern's *The Greek Commonwealth*, Brandeis came to connect his new interest in Jews with his old love of the classics and especially of fifth-century Athens, where he believed that his dream of a city in which everyone put participation in public life first, had been realized. Zimmern shared Brandeis's dream and believed that the geographical situation of Palestine made it a likely home for a revival of Athenian democracy.

Through his meeting with a remarkable Palestinian Jew, Aaron Aaronson, who had discovered wild wheat, Brandeis's two leading interests – Jewish national ties and Athenian democracy – converged to produce a devotion to Zionism. Whereas earlier he had criticized "hyphenated Americans" because their preoccupation with differences of origin and religion was "inconsistent with the American ideal of brotherhood", in 1914 he declared in a public lecture that "Practical experience and observation convinced me . . . that to be good Americans we must be better Jews, and to be better Jews, we must become Zionists". He deplored the "misnamed internationalism which seeks the obliteration of national ties or peoples" and he urged Americans to adopt "a new nationalism" that would secure the rights of minorities. After the Balfour Declaration, however, Brandeis became impatient with attempts "to revitalize Jewish culture" anywhere outside Palestine and threw all his formidable energy and resources into promoting Zionism. By 1919, he had transformed American Zionism into a very large and extremely effective movement.

Although Brandeis had often been urged to leave the Court and become a leader in the world Zionist movement, he soon came into conflict with its chief, Chaim Weizmann. Strum attributes the conflict between Brandeis and Weizmann not to rivalry between two powerful generals within one army, but to their different objectives. In this connection, we meet with yet another Brandeis, who seems never to have had any interest in Judaism and to have forgotten his earlier interest in preserving or reviving Jewish culture. He wanted now to make Palestine an agrarian community, where there would be no private ownership of land or resources and no "easy money" or "easy living"; a community which would "serve as laboratory for some far-reaching experiments in democracy and social justice". To this end, Brandeis urged Zionists to concentrate on eliminating malaria and promoting economic development in Palestine. Whereas Weizmann was absorbed in reviving the Hebrew language, Brandeis did not think of Palestine as wholly Jewish but assumed that non-Jews would be a substantial minority there and be admitted to equal citizenship. The two men became leaders of opposing factions; Brandeis described Weizmann as an evil man who made his followers deaf to reason; and Weizmann returned the compliment by accusing Brandeis (with some reason, as Strum acknowledges) of wanting to run Zionism without taking on the responsibility of office. The conflict ended with the resignation of Brandeis, along with Judge Mack and Felix Frankfurter, from the world Zionist organization.

The inconsistencies and shifts in Brandeis's opinions are not connected by Strum to his antipathy to philosophy. Yet it is remarkable that, despite his love of the classics, Brandeis despised philosophy and looked forward to the day when politics and government would be "the first of the sciences and arts". All the books that he read and his skill at mustering arguments seem never to have inspired him to cultivate the art of reflection. The passages from his favourite authors that he liked to quote were all in support of practical improvement. He seems to have been too absorbed in doing things to improve the world to ask himself hard questions about his own ideas. This odd combination of confusion in thought with great intellectual gifts and practical zeal has become the distinguishing mark of the liberal mind. In England, the perfect example of it is John Stuart Mill; Brandeis is a model of American liberalism.

One would like to know more about Brandeis's relations to the United Shoe Machinery Company, which worried many of his critics during the fight over his appointment to the Court; and much more about his attitude towards the great international events of his adult years, such as the Bolshevik Revolution, the rise of Mussolini and Hitler, and the Spanish Civil War. Nevertheless, it is a tribute to the care with which Professor Strum has told her story that those who do not share her enthusiasms may nevertheless read her book with great profit and enjoyment.

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'Only the remnants of spring are left. All is still on the peaktop with the exception of a broken straggle of harvester ants moving toward their nest entrance to escape the fierce sun. There is no wind, only heat radiating from bleached stones. Unexpectedly, a small piece of desert rises from the ground. It scuttles into the partial shade of a shrub whose blackened and leafless limbs cover a portion of the ant nest. From desert colors and desert forms a horned lizard miraculously reconstitutes itself before my eyes.'
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Figments of an English life

Victoria Glendinning

MICHAEL HOLROYD (Editor)
Peterley Harvest: The private diary of David Peterley
286pp. Secker and Warburg. £8.95.
0436367157

Peterley Harvest, an egragious addition to the Arts Council Reprint Library, is being publicized as a "mystery book". It first appeared in 1960, and was quickly withdrawn, leaving reviewers suspecting that they had been taken for a ride. It purported to be the private diary of David Peterley, covering the years between 1930 and the outbreak of war. Peterley clearly had musical and literary tastes, a wide acquaintance, private means and a semi-professional interest in the theatre.

No one had heard of Peterley, and his name occurs in no memoirs of the period. Yet the diary seems authentic in its easy reference to plays, books, current events, and to the well-known people – writers, actresses, politicians, some still alive – who appear in its pages as themselves, their conversation recorded verbatim and their letters to Peterley transcribed. The diary was edited by Richard Pennington, head librarian at McGill University, into whose hands it had somehow fallen. Pennington explains in his preface how Peterley's account of a sojourn in Australia in the late 1920s was so long that he had taken the liberty of summarizing it, and that Peterley himself had partly rewritten his diary, changing the location of his country house and upgrading it in grandeur, and disguising the identity of some of his friends.

The diarist is articulate, introspective and self-absorbed, a man with every grace and talent and no occupation. He opts for the literary life "since there seems nothing else to do". Mostly he records his private life, which Pennington calls his "sentimental vagabondage". A melancholy, self-conscious, class-conscious man, he philanders compulsively. Even in love he is indecisive and uncommitted. He drops one mistress flat when she has a nervous breakdown on his account. He marries, almost by default, a girl who will suit his country house, and divorces her in the same way, the pros and cons on each occasion seeming equally balanced. Only one of his many women has the spirit to point out his "terror of being attached" and to suggest that if he were not so fascinated by the spectacle of himself he might be happier.

Peterley seems to be a cultivated left-over, an elegiac lover of traditional England, of rooks in the elms, tea on the lawn and himself as "part of an elegant composition in an ordered landscape" – a recognizable type, ornamental, contemplative, ineffectual and not yet extinct. In the 1930s, that most political of decades, he is forced into engagement with events by Hitler's advances, and becomes involved in drumming up British support for Czechoslovakia. When that fails, he feels his own defeat is terminal: "I do not think there is anything else I could possibly fail at."

Michael Holroyd's new introduction implicitly confirms what some reviewers guessed in 1960 – that David Peterley and his editor, Richard Pennington, were one and the same person. Pennington was writing disguised autobiography, and Peterley's experiences and sensibilities are perhaps his own. But Pennington did not himself belong to the privileged élite: there is romantic envy and ambivalence in his co-option of Perterley's social world. Holroyd suggests that Pennington was living out a fantasy, raising himself "from an inferior social position through the phantom figure of David Peterley". Apparently he was, in the 1930s, the librarian at the National Liberal Club (of which Peterley and his friends are members).

Holroyd, discussing the suggestive possibilities of fictional fact and factual fiction, obliquely sustains the mystification surrounding this book. To solve all the riddles of *Peterley Harvest*, he writes, one would need an introduction by Pennington himself, "and, perhaps, after all, that would only add to them". For a wild moment it seems possible that Pennington is as much a "phantom figure" as the diarist. For an even wilder moment it seems possible that *Peterley Harvest* records the "sentimental vagabondage" of none other than Holroyd himself. Pennington's name does not appear as editor on title-page or dust-jacket, while Holroyd's does. Holroyd's earliest biographical researches would have afforded him intimate knowledge of the literary and social worlds of the 1930s. Reference to *Who's Who* reveals that he would have been only twenty-five in 1960, which does not give him much time to have acquired Peterley's experience of life and love; but, as the diarist notes, "we are made up of all the things wished for as well as achieved". *Who's Who* also reveals Holroyd as having been educated, Eton apart, in Maidenhead Public Library, only a morning's bicycle ride away from the beech-wooded south Buckinghamshire of Peterley's faked ancestral acres.

Unfortunately this hypothesis collapses after a little research into Pennington's Australian period. Peterley describes in the diary how on his return to England he tries to interest J. C. Squire of the *London Mercury* in a major Australian poet, Christopher Brennan. Squire presumes this then unknown genius to be a figment of Peterley's imagination – as did Cyril Connolly, when he reviewed the book in 1960. But library catalogues list *Christopher Brennan: Some recollections* by Richard Pennington (1970), and Pennington's help is acknowledged in a full biography of Brennan by Alex Clark published in 1980. This book even reproduces a photograph of Pennington taken in Australia in 1928 – blond and clean-shaven, pipe in mouth, in shorts and knee-socks, the smiling stereotype of the Englishman abroad.

Clark's biography of Brennan also mentions Pennington's Australian friends, notably Mr and Mrs Robert Innes Kay and Mr and Mrs John Gunn. Not only do they crop up under their real names in *Peterley Harvest*, but Mrs Innes Kay and Mrs Gunn are unequivocally included among Peterley's loves. Mrs Innes Kay's love-letters, real or invented, are copied into the diary; the tender passages with Mrs Gunn are resumed when she visits England and her conversation noted down.

These two may not have been the only victims of Peterley/Pennington's real or imagined philandering who recognized themselves when the book first appeared. It's not hard to imagine the screams of outrage that precipitated its hasty withdrawal. As a mixture of naivety and sophistication, self-publicity and self-concealment, *Peterley Harvest* would be hard to beat. Its ambiguity leaves the reader with the disturbing idea that not only Peterley and his ladies, but Pennington, Brennan, Brennan's biographer, J. C. Squire, Cyril Connolly, Michael Holroyd and the present reviewer are all equally real or unreal, figments of a collective literary imagination – a concept best formulated by the phantom diarist, who describes literature as "a pathological excrescence on the normal life".

In praise of Smiley

Nigel Clive

RICHARD DEACON
'C': A biography of Sir Maurice Oldfield, Head of MI6
279pp. Macdonald. £9.95.
0356104001

Donald McCormick, who writes under the name of Richard Deacon, has shown his continued fascination with the esoteric world of Secret Services by producing a life of the most publicized Head of SIS since the war, who died in 1981. The picture that emerges is of an almost saintly character, blessed with all the skills of his unusual trade, who hardly ever put a foot wrong and who was spared the burden of most human failings. If this presentation, which at times reads like a piece of hagiography, makes no reference to some of the mistakes he made professionally or to the unsurprising fact that Oldfield was no less human than the next man in furthering his own interests, it is to be preferred to any radically different account of the first man since 1945 who (deservedly) reached the top from inside the Service.

Deacon quite rightly makes much of Oldfield's early life. He was the eldest of eleven children, born to respected tenant farmers in a Derbyshire village. Swotting up his homework late at night won him prizes at Lady Manners Grammar School and a scholarship to Manchester University. But he always found time to help out on the farm, as well as to learn to play the piano, the organ and the violin. At Manchester he took a First in history and was all set for an academic career when these plans were upset by the war.

He spent most of the war in the Middle East, starting in a humble intelligence capacity, but later rising swiftly in rank and reputation, his skills having been spotted by Brigadier Roberts, the Head of Security Intelligence Middle East. It was Roberts who persuaded Oldfield not to return to academic life after the war and who brought him to SIS as his deputy when he took over Kim Philby's job. In the 1950s Oldfield had two periods of service in Singapore, first as deputy and then as Head of the SIS office covering South-East Asia and the Far East, where he established his name as a flyer, became absorbed by Chinese history and even astrology and started to make his first influential contacts with the CIA.

In recognition of his past record of service Oldfield was selected to spend the next four years, from 1960 to 64, in Washington. It was no easy task to keep the flag flying when the Service he represented had so recently had Philby and Blake on its staff. But is was not out of a wish to curry favour with the CIA, but from genuine conviction, that Oldfield started to accept the outpourings of the notorious KGB defector, Anatoli Golitsyn, and his prime CIA sponsor, Jim Angleton, who claimed that the mountain of military intelligence passed to SIS by Penkovsky was pure disinformation. This was later followed up by the contention that the Sino-Soviet conflict was likewise a single case of disinformation. It took some time for Oldfield to regain his balance. When he left Washington in 1964, he had saved his later reputation by abandoning his belief in most of Golitsyn's stories. If, however, he confessed his errors when on his knees, there was, quite understandably, no overt admission or explanation of how someone of his calibre had allowed himself to be so misled.

Soon after his return to London, Oldfield had reason to feel aggrieved when he was passed over for the top position in favour of Sir John Rennie. When, however, he was finally made Head of MI6 in 1973, he shone by comparison with his predecessor. The Service benefited from the good relations he skilfully cultivated with Ministers and with important people on both sides of the House, and he improved its standing with friendly foreign intelligence services. He was also the first holder of his office to cultivate chosen journalists, who helped (if inaccurately) confused him with le Carré's George Smiley. Five years of consorting with the great never affected his regular attendance at St Matthew's Westminster or contact with his village in Derbyshire.

On retirement, his move to All Souls made it look as if he would restart academic life. But in October 1979 the Prime Minister nominated him to take charge of Security and Intelligence in Northern Ireland. Unfortunately the strains of office soon told on him and ill health forced him out of the job the following May. Within a year he was dead at the comparatively early age of sixty-five. If there is an after-life, in which Oldfield, as a devout High Anglican fervently believed, he should have reason to relish this version of his private and professional life.

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Cambridge University Press

Meetings of the twain

Dick Wilson

PAN LING
Old Shanghai: Gangsters in paradise
239pp. Hong Kong: Heinemann Asia. HK$60.
962225 1641

Those who predicted that Communism would never crush the extraordinary spirit of the people of Shanghai are about to be proved right. In the new turn of post-Maoist China towards pragmatism, private enterprise and the Great Leap Outwards (as Shanghai wits call the "open door" policy of the present leadership under Deng Xiaoping), this fabled but humbled city stands to gain in stature, importance and wealth.

It is, after all, the greatest urban concentration outside the American continent, and yet its colourful history remains strangely ill-chronicled. For almost a century it was the Paris not only of China, but also of Asia, the only whole-hearted meeting-point of West and East on ground where all kinds of legal jurisdictions jostled together. Shanghai showed what China might have been like if she had opened up to the outside world as India did. It was a unique Chinese-Western hybrid, forming an integration that proved transient and premature but is still lamented by its few middle-class survivors and may yet become the model for another century.

Shanghai's citizens had a vitality, a quicksilver brilliance, oceans apart from the bureaucratic reserve of Peking or the expressive amenability of Canton. They drew, it seemed, from the toughness of north China and the softness of south China, merging the best of those Confucian qualities into an exciting alloy. Virtually every artist, writer, intellectual, entrepreneur and innovator of note in China's most recent century came from Shanghai or flourished there. It was like, an American resident explained, "the French Revolution, the Industrial Revolution and the Renaissance all taking place at one and the same time". Shanghai was the city of extremes, of degradation and extravagance, full of sin and shame but scintillating with style.

Westerners were always fascinated, but their tributes, appropriately, were more creative than documentary – André Malraux's novel *La Condition Humaine*, for example, or Vicki Baum's *Nanking Road*. Historians have been baffled by the cultural amalgam: the recent School of Oriental and African Studies' volume edited by Christopher Howe (*Shanghai: Revolution and development in an Asian metropolis*) begins to bite at the rich material without yet trying to digest it fully.

When J. V. Davidson-Houston wrote his *Yellow Creek: The story of Shanghai* in the early 1960s, he dedicated it to "the men from the West who built Asia's greatest city", which is only half the story. Nor does he once mention the main character in Pan Ling's new book, Du Yuesheng (1887–1951), the most famous of Shanghai's political and underworld bosses, the mafia-like figure who rallied his Green Jade Gang to ensure Chiang Kai-shek's victory over the Communists and left-wing trade unions in 1927. This was the man whom W. H. Auden and Christopher Isherwood found in 1938 "tall and thin, with a face that seemed hewn out of stone", and with "peculiarly and inexplicably terrifying . . . feet, in their silk socks and smart pointed European boots, emerging from beneath the long silken gown".

Du was uneducated, reputedly illiterate, a gangster who led the city's resistance against Japan – and was hailed in the end as a patriot. Pan Ling sat next to Du's son at a banquet in Shanghai four years ago, and that was the germ of this book. The life-story of Du is skilfully interwoven here with those of Wang Jingwei, the traitor who collaborated with Japan in the 1930s, Zhou Fohai, another political turncoat, a famous secret police chief and their various women and henchmen.

The women of Shanghai were proverbial, exquisite and, for the most part, appallingly exploited. Pan Ling cites a telling detail from the execution of a police chief's teenage mistress: her last words to her killers were, "Whatever you do, don't mutilate my face." Another anecdote concerns the trouble to which the official Chinese mission to Italy went after the Japanese invasion to include a Shanghai girl for Count Ciano, the Foreign Minister and the Duce's son-in-law, of the kind he had so admired when he was Consul-General in Shanghai. She did not prise the Italians from their commitment to Japan, however.

Old Shanghai accurately evokes the mood and feeling of the city in the first half of this century, though historians may be dissatisfied by the lack of documentation. The characters speak and soliloquize freely, they snap their high heels and spill their drinks most humanly, and Pan Ling makes clear that the reconstruction, drawn from an "array of historical facts, biographies, memoirs, quotations and reminiscences" (not further specified), is of psychological rather than factual reality – and that "the book borders on fiction". With no footnotes and only half a page of bibliography, this is not a historical source-book. But it is a superb and emotionally sure-footed narrative which conveys more understanding of Shanghai than a dozen drily academic works might do.

And how timely, just as the ancient capitalists and their new-look sons, eager to fructify their generation's marriage between communist idealism and family-transmitted business guile, are beginning cautiously to come into the open. The leftist excesses of the Gang of Four, the Shanghai Commune (which in 1967 had sought to reproduce the Paris Commune of 1871) and the Thoughts of Chairman Mao are all far behind. The Stock Exchange and share issues are being revived, personal cheque accounts are available again, and there is even a new Shanghai Entrepreneurs' Club with over 460 members. When Ruan Chongwu, the elegant technocrat whom observers tip as the next mayor, tells the *Financial Times* correspondent, "Don't forget Hongkong's richest millionaires are from Shanghai", we are being warned of the fact that Shanghai is preparing to surprise us once again.

Chinese Charleston

Delia Davin

KATHERINE WEI and TERRY QUINN
Second Daughter: Growing up in China 1930–1949
243pp. Harvill Press. £8.95.
0002729067

Katherine Wei was born in Peking in 1930 and left China for the United States in 1949. *Second Daughter* is a memoir of her childhood. Although written in an at times irritatingly arch, literary style, her story is engrossing and provides an unsentimental view of a lost world.

As the daughter of a professor of sociology at Yenching, Peking's American university, Katherine lived a life of ease and privilege. Her family maintained a staff of seven, a cook, a maid, a gardener and an amah for each of the four children. None the less, she was emotionally deprived. Her mother, the daughter of a Shanghai merchant, had channelled her considerable energy into ambition for her family. She was an image-creator, and her husband and children were her materials. She held lavish dinner-parties at which her small daughters, dressed in tartan skirts and patent-leather shoes, had to dance a carefully rehearsed Charleston for the entertainment of the guests. English was the only language spoken on these occasions, and she insisted that the men, whether Chinese or foreign, should wear Western suits.

Madame Wei regarded herself as an emancipated woman. She smoked American cigarettes and breast-fed her babies instead of hiring a wet-nurse. Katherine was six when she first saw through this façade: her mother had been allowed to believe that her newborn fourth infant was the boy she had longed for. Katherine unwittingly revealed the deception and was then appalled at her mother's distress. Modern as she claimed to be, she had to endure the deepest sense of failure because she had no sons.

Despite Katherine's ambivalence towards her, her mother dominates this memoir as she dominated the lives on which it is based. The children were watched over constantly by their amahs and their friendships were supervised by their mother. Only their relationship with their cook, Lao Chang, was different. When alone with them, he spoke to them as if he were their equal. He told them stories, took them on picnics, listened to them and tried to explain the world to them. In return Katherine came to regard him as her only true friend: his execution for communist sympathies years later in Shanghai was to mark the end of her childhood.

The Japanese invasion of north China in 1937 destroyed Katherine's protected life at Yenching. Her family travelled two thousand miles to the safety of her father's ancestral home in Hunan where they joined her grandfather's great feudal household. Katherine, chosen by her grandfather to be trained by his concubines to wait on him and prepare his opium at night, had a close view of the awesome power of the remote old patriarch. In 1943, Katherine, her sisters and her mother were able to join her father, who had already been working for several years in Chungking, China's wartime capital. Life there was hard but at least the girls were able to resume their schooling. Two years later, at the end of the war, they travelled down the Yangtse to Shanghai, where Katherine's aunt and uncle helped them to re-establish their former comfortable way of life, which they were to enjoy for three more years in the shadow of the civil war.

Weeks before the Communist armies entered Shanghai, Katherine, sad at the death of her old friend, the cook, and bitter as ever against her mother, departed for a new life in the United States. She returned briefly thirty-two years later to a strange world. Her memories of China in her childhood have an authenticity which her short account of her recent visit entirely lacks. The scale of change had been so great that she could no longer understand her country of origin.

In *Chinese Defence Policy*, edited by Gerald Segal and William T. Tow (286pp. Macmillan. £25. 0 333 35132 0), eighteen contributors consider various aspects of the topic under the headings "Sources of Strategy", "The Armed Services", "The Economic Dimension" and "Foreign Policy: Threat and Promise".

The Helper

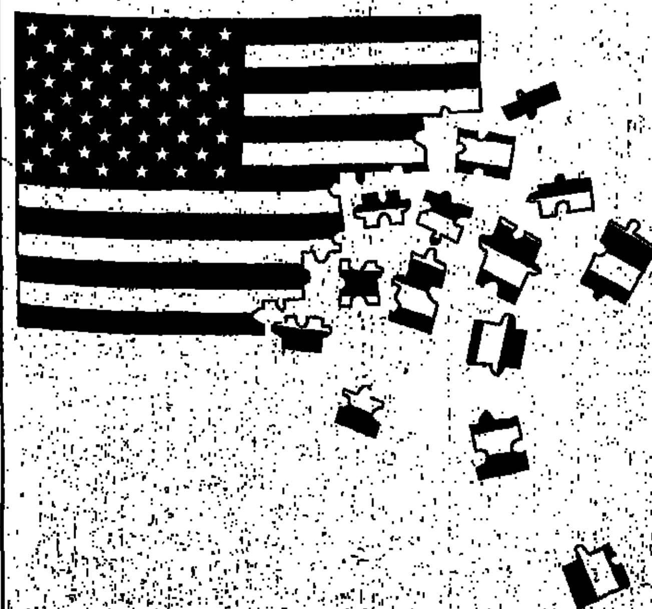
Each night he'd tap
his wife's shoulder, wait,
rise and cross the marble hall,
passing the children's rooms.

He lay with her
even in the afternoons
persuading his wife to leave
without him for the cinema.

Tonight, she lies
as wakeful as the wife;
a mother's helper,

smoothing the single sheet
as she prepares the scene
for the final tangle.

ALICE KAVOUNAS



Habits of the Heart
Individualism and Commitment in American Life
ROBERT N. BELLAH, RICHARD MADSEN, WILLIAM M. SULLIVAN, ANN SWIDLER and STEVEN M. TIPTON
In *Democracy in America* Alexis de Tocqueville spoke about 'the habits of the heart', referring to those notions, opinions and ideas that shaped 'mental habits' and 'the sum of moral and intellectual dispositions of men in society'. It is with these habits of the heart – with the cultural traditions and practices which have helped to form American character – that the authors of this remarkable book are concerned. Across the sweep of America's cultural history and in intimate stories of individual lives, *Habits of the Heart* explores the ways in which Americans see themselves. Based on extended conversations with hundreds of Americans, the authors introduce a set of characters who represent familiar American voices and embody controversies which regularly enter the nation's public and private moral discourse and whose voices serve to introduce key aspects of contemporary American culture.
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The Trouble with America
MICHEL CROZIER (Foreword by David Reisman)
In the short term, nothing succeeds like success. But in the long term – as history teaches us – just the reverse is true. Prolonged success inevitably brings decline. Michel Crozier, the most Tocquevillian of the European sociologists, has seen America at its best and its worst. His regular visits to the country over thirty years have led him to vividly contrast the eager, active and generous spirit that prevailed in the fifties and sixties with the pessimistic and dispirited mood that prevails today. Crozier shows how America's much celebrated patterns of organisation cannot meet the challenge of the postindustrial world since they have become paralyzed by bureaucratic entanglements, even more so than European ones. American bureaucratic modes, however, are not recognised because they are rooted in legalism. Crozier's analysis of the American 'delerium of due process' is a challenging and penetrating piece of social criticism.
£17.75 Hardback 200pp 0520049870

UNIVERSITY OF California PRESS
126 Buckingham Palace Road London SW1W 9SD

Boosting the status of the text

Adam Mars-Jones

E. L. DOCTOROW
Lives of the Poets
145pp. Michael Joseph. £8.95.
0 7181 2529 0

E. L. Doctorow's new book has the good sense to start with its one strong story; that story ("The Writer in the Family") has the further good sense to cram its preposterous *donnée*, from which the rest proceeds with much poignant force, into the first three sentences: "In 1955 my father died with his ancient mother still alive in a nursing home. The old lady was ninety and hadn't even known he was ill. Thinking the shock might kill her, my aunts told her that he had moved to Arizona for his bronchitis." The narrator Jonathan, "the writer in the family", is prevailed on by the aunts to write a letter in the persona of his father whenever the old lady gets impatient for news from Arizona.

Mourning is the energy released by a death: each of the characters enacts a different version. The widow, strapped for cash, takes a job in the admissions office of the hospital where her husband has been treated. Jonathan and his brother Jack refuse even to try on their dead father's suits, in spite of their mother's assurances that they have been thoroughly cleaned. Even Aunt Frances, who has helped to set the whole fraud in motion, is confronted by the reality of loss while she reads Jonathan's first lying letter to the blind old lady, and has to go out into the parking lot to cry.

The estate takes time to settle, and so does its emotional counterpart. The grave lacks a headstone, because of a stonecutters' strike. Meanwhile the old lady lives on, greedy for news; but by its third epistolary episode, Jonathan's fiction lets in the death it was meant to keep distant.

The other stories are no less confident from paragraph to paragraph, but structurally incomplete or uncertain. In the four-page fragment "The Water Works", for instance, the narrator is uncharacterized and perhaps invisible; the style has an unspecified period feel. The narrative of "The Hunter" limps in a way that is clearly intentional, but no less baffling for that: "Down at water's edge sits the old brassworks, a long two-storey brick building with a tower at one end and it is behind locked fences and many of its windows are broken."

"The Foreign Legation" tells the story of a deserted husband who fills his time with fantasies and routines, but then grafts onto it an apocalyptic ending (he is the accidental victim of a terrorist atrocity), as if suddenly afraid of its own inconsequence, hoping to blot it out with a big red full stop.

These suggestions of blockage and identity crisis are confirmed by the novella that gives the collection its title. That title is formal and literary, but the novella is casually anecdotal; it purports to be the typewriter-soliloquy of a successful writer called Jonathan (presumably the Jonathan of "The Writer in the Family"), who has taken a studio apartment away from his family as a writing space.

There is one reference to a book Jonathan has been promising to write for a long time, called *Lives of the Poets* (none of his actual work is named or discussed), but the reflexiveness is tired and not carried through. There are also passages that recur in the novella from the story "The Foreign Legation", in a way that suggests either an extreme of authorial laziness or the implication that Jonathan wrote the story. This hint, again, is allowed to drop.

What Jonathan confides to his typewriter is actually standard middle-aged self-doubt (is this all that there is?); it owes its supposed validity to his status as a literary artist, but a writer's career is never considered in "Lives of the Poets" as a body of work, only as an aggregate of grants, fellowships and propositions.

Writing gives Jonathan what dentistry gives a dentist: a place in the world. He takes stock. He has a quick-witted and attractive wife, a house in the forest and a house at the seashore; if he chooses to use his studio for the purpose, "I'm fairly sure I can summon any one of a half-dozen women who on little or no notice will be delighted to spend the night with me." Then, since sexual status is a serious subject, he corrects himself immediately: "That's a modest estimate. They will get in their cars, fly in from other cities."

Jonathan's wry attractiveness keeps turning to unpleasantness. His attitude to his wife is ugly; he resents her for imitating him (she wants "to mingle our souls like some gloppy finger painting"), but whenever she disagrees with him, she is wrong.

Jonathan's unpleasantness could become enjoyable if "Lives of the Poets" was a persona piece, its hero an aggressively brilliant critic of the world, but his rage is too small-minded to be impressive. He takes it for granted that writers should have nice studios with word processors next to their Tunturi exercycles and Everlast punchbags, but resents it when workmen across the street make alterations "so some invert can have light in his loft".

Nor does Doctorow quite take the risk of having invented celebrities attend the launch parties of his invented authors: "Every writer who's in town is there, Norman and Kurt . . .". These guest stars are there to boost the status of the text.

Doctorow can still describe things brilliantly, as long as they are at some distance from the point of view: looking out of his window, Jonathan sees a teacher leading a crocodile of children "like an old monoplane dragging an advertisement through the sky". But the nearer the narrator comes to examining himself and his immediate surroundings (like any other sufferer from middle-aged long-sightedness), the coarser and more compromised are his perceptions. His attempts to diagnose career worries and marital niggles as spiritual states are actually part of the syndrome.

At the end of the novella Jonathan, jilted by a woman who has been sending him gloppy postcards from around the world, finally admits that the studio was acquired with her in mind, that the Muse would be playing gooseberry in the writing space. He then fills the studio with needy illegal immigrants. Not since the 1960s has a writer so crudely used a social problem to shore up his solipsism.

The weapon of laughter

Linda Taylor

ANDREA LEE
Sarah Phillips
117pp. Faber. £8.95.
0 571 13454 8
PAULE MARSHALL
Merle: A novella and other stories
210pp. Virago. £9.95 (paperback, £3.95).
0 86068 665 5

These two books emerge from very different black American backgrounds, but they are linked by a sense of the past, of negro ancestry; where Paule Marshall is explicit about her roots (in her introductions to these republished stories, in her essay on writing, "From the Poet's Kitchen", and in the fabric of the stories themselves), Andrea Lee's novel, with its patchwork presentation of a middle-class mulatto girl's life, only inadvertently, it seems, refers to a deeper "black" sensibility.

Sarah Phillips, the eponymous narrator, is, after all, almost white – Roger, in Paris, calls her a "pasteurized Negress". Her father is a minister of the New African Baptist Church and a Civil Rights movement leader. In Philadelphia, Sarah had the advantages of both "a comfortable, insular, middle class black neighbourhood swathed in billiard-green lawns" and "a family with a fixed optimism about the brotherhood of man". The novel begins at the end – Paris, in 1974 – where "naughty and perverse" Sarah, aged nineteen, lives, and intermittently sleeps, with three men; postures for them in the nude; and laughs louder than anyone at their racist jokes ("part of our special brand of humour"). Cynical and protective, this humour is related to a fit of giggling that seizes the twelve-year-old Sarah when she discovers at her white boarding school that she has been offered the walk-on part of a black maid in the school play, having auditioned brilliantly "for the pixieish dancing daughter, Essie": "It was laughter that burned my insides like vinegar, and it felt different from any way I have ever laughed before".

Paule Marshall also portrays laughter as a weapon of pained derision. In "Brooklyn", a mulatto girl, sexually harassed by an elderly Jewish man, destroys his pathetic attempt to seduce her with a bitter and powerful flow of rhetoric, with her cold, pitiless smile, and with "her sudden laugh, an infinitely cruel sound in the warm night". And Merle, in the title story, responds to the white woman Harriet's attempt to buy her off, to send her back to Africa and away from Harriet's husband, with terrible laughter: "It was an ugly anguished scream torn from the top of her voice." Though the reactions of these characters to prejudice and exploitation is curiously similar, the tone is quite different: Marshall vivid, sombre and chilling, Lee cool and detached.

For Sarah, looking back on her childhood, this kind of distance is the product of liberal parents and an expensive education. Prescott (her school) and Harvard make her feelings as a mulatto (she is a light-skinned negress who longs for blond curls and blue eyes at a time – the 1960s – when it was becoming heroic to be black) rather less heart-rending than those of the struggling Southern girl in "Brooklyn" (written in the 1950s):

> ever since I can remember my parents were always telling me, "Stay away from white folks. Just leave them alone . . .". And my parents were also telling me, "Stay away from niggers", and that meant anybody darker than we were . . . . I was so confused I never really went near anybody.

Sarah is more often paraded as a symbol of integration – attending the white girls' school, going to a multi-national summer camp – by parents who ironically are offended by Sarah's brother's relationship with a Jewess. Despite the gypsies' prejudice against "coloureds" and the adults' bitter jokes that she doesn't understand, Sarah has been brought up to believe that she is as good as everyone else. Feeling decadently European in Paris, she finds Henri's exotic version of her ("*Reine d'Afrique, petite Indienne*") incomprehensible. She discovers a kind of enslavement in her carefree indolence that sends her back to her roots:

> what an awful joke it was to find, as I had found, that nothing could be dissolved or thrown away . . . . For me the bright, frank, endlessly beckoning horizon of the runaway had been, at some point, transformed into a complicated return.

Marshall's vision is less circumspect, more romantic. Her Barbadian parents moved to the United States after the First World War and she writes about "what it means to be a black woman in America today" with the black woman's history very firmly in view. The women of her mother's generation, as they strove to make a life in the alien streets of Brooklyn, were forceful matriarchs. They worked at menial jobs for property and possessions: "their consuming ambition [was] to 'buy house' and to see the children through". They recognized the power of language: "In this man world you got take yuh mouth and make a gun!" It is this rhetorical art that Marshall learnt in the kitchen and that she uses in the speech of her characters, her imagery and robust narration. In the same way that the native speech thrives on paradox (composite adjectives like "beautiful-ugly"), the writing stresses the combustible energy of opponents: Jewish white male versus mulatto woman; ancient Barbadian grandmother versus nine-year-old grand-daughter; black, complacent businessman versus poor black servant girl. These are radical political confrontations: it's only by the death of what is culpable, reactionary, other, that the young women (the new order) emerge.

With Reena, from the story of that name, and Merle, however, Marshall is dealing with another branch of the sisterhood: because of their education (at city colleges rather than an Ivy League school), they can use the weapons of the white world. Merle, in particular, is larger than life (noisy, garrulous, vulgar), containing many of the elements of Marshall's wide-ranging females. She lives on the Caribbean island where she was born; she has been educated; she has lived in England; she has been exploited by a rich white woman; she has been married; she has a child (symbolically) in Africa. On the island, Merle fits nowhere and everywhere, living with the poor and socialising with the rich: she is "the perfect cultural broker".

Marshall's prose resounds to both the vibrant domestic lives of her women and to the rhetoric of political radicalism. But these stories seem to have been pulled together (with their authorial comments and their often faulty structure) to make stirring statements. Refreshingly sacrilegious about the past, Andrea Lee's irreverence is often more effective than many of Marshall's darker sentiments. Lee's writing has a poignancy epitomized by Sarah and her brother's paradoxical feelings towards their father's church:

> a mixture of pride and animosity toward the richly decorated and infinitely suggestive playground where we were petted by a congregation that adored our father; on the other hand, it seemed a bit like a dreadful old relative in the city, one who forced us into tedious visits and who linked us to a past that came to seem embarrassingly primitive as we grew older.

Three works by Arthur Koestler have recently been reissued in hardback editions by Cape: the novels *Darkness at Noon* (254pp. £8.95. 0 224 02993 2) and *Arrival and Departure*, Koestler's first novel written in English (188pp. £8.95. 0 224 02994 0), and *The Yogi and the Commissar* (256pp. £8.95. 0 224 60388 4), consisting of two groups of political and literary essays and "Explorations", an investigation into "the Soviet experiment", first published in 1945. Of this last volume the author comments in a foreword, "Since my schooldays I have not ceased to marvel each year at the fool I had been the year before. This is still true today, but in a modified form . . . lately the new revelations seem to combine into a pattern sufficiently elastic to absorb the new material and yet with a certain consistency in its basic features."

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Narratives of grief

Blake Morrison

DOUGLAS DUNN
Elegies
64pp. Faber. £7.50 (paperback, £4).
0 571 13570 6

These elegies, the blurb tells us (and it is all that it tells us), "were written after the death of Douglas Dunn's wife in March 1981". It is an explanation of the book's origin, not an appeal for pity or indulgence: Dunn would want the book to be judged as a book, not as a *cri de coeur*. Necessarily, the poems are at times appallingly intimate – "Keep writing until there is nothing left", a friend is heard advising in one poem, and as readers we are made party to the act of purgation – but there is nothing indecent about them or, rather, nothing voyeuristic about reading them. They are shaped and measured but have no rhetorical designs on us; the poet watches his quatrains and rhyme-schemes, not his readers' tear-ducts. None the less, we can't prevent our critical judgment from being affected by what we know to have happened. The book's power is, in part, that it is true. Its *frissons* are the *frissons* of authenticity, and when the poet seems maudlin or mawkish it's impossible not to make allowances. What might look like crude irony in a made-up tale (the moment, for example, when Dunn goes to register his wife's death and ends up among wedding-parties instead; or the fly he comes across squashed between the pages of a story of Katherine Mansfield's called "Bliss", from a book bought in happier and more innocent times) here becomes life's habit of being ironic: the literal truth literally told melts our disbelief. Amid so much misfortune, this is the poet's one piece of luck, and he is right to ride it, as Thomas Hardy and more recently Peter Porter do in their elegies for *their* dead wives: all enjoy the advantage, not of course an advantage nor at all enjoyable, of writing at first-hand about an experience that is serious, sombre but above all true.

Dunn calls the experience "sensible, commonplace, beyond understanding" and finds a variety of forms to contain not guilt or bitterness but simply grief: sonnets, quatrains, intricate rhyme-schemes. But he also knows when plain-speaking and blank verse are poetry enough:

> "Is this the door?" This must be it. No, no.
> We come across crowds and confetti, weddings
> With well-wishers, relatives, whimsical bridesmaids.
> Some have happened. Others are waiting their turn.
> One is taking place before the Registrar.
> A young groom is unsteady in his new shoes.
> His bride is nervous on the edge of the future.
> I walk through them with the father of my dead wife.
> I redefine the meaning of "strangers".
> Death, too, must have looked in on our wedding.
> The building stinks of municipal function.
> "Go through with it. You have to. It's the law."
> So I say to a clerk, "I have come about a death."
> "In there", she says. "You came in by the wrong
> door."

This is not as artless as it seems, and there is an inevitable echo of another chance encounter of this kind, Larkin's "The Whitsun Weddings". But Dunn is careful in any case to do more than merely tell it as it was. The opening poems describe the "story" of his wife's death: the "second opinion" which confirms the presence of cancer; his wife sitting up in bed receiving guests, cheerful and courageous; the strange atmosphere – "erotic" and "beautiful" for all the pain – of their last nights together. There are flashes of something like grim humour, as when he registers her death: "Everyone receives this Certificate. / You do not need even to deserve it." From very early in the book the poet moves beyond the immediate source of his grief to the past he shared with his wife – holidays in France, her love of food, clothes and art, their marriage as a brief summer – and to the residue of loss. These memories and reflections – "radiantly painful speculations", as he calls them, "light with meditation, religiose / and mystic" – draw him into a world where dream breaks in on reality and language grows bolder and more expansive: "I go into the bedroom of the world", "I meet the seasons on the stairs", "A floral light / Bleaches my eye with angelophanous / Secrets".

He is moved, too, in the book's longest and most imaginative poems, "Pretended Homes" and "The Stories", to invent landscapes and fictions in which his wife can reappear or he himself find his proper place. The first imagines an island "on no map" to which a sea-circus comes "with its elephants, clowns and saxophones": she can live in this extraordinary place as she can't in the "real house" where she died and where (a rich pun) "all my calling cannot bring her back". The second poem, more subdued, imagines those "far-flung outposts of Empire" where a widower might once have gone to bury his pain:

> I can see myself in a jungle-drunk's smeared linen
> suit
> Under the fan in a lost trading post,
> Most Maugham-ish in my matutinal repartee
> At my breakfast of mango and whisky
> As the steamer arrives, delicate with white nuns
> And crates of Haig and quinine, the new clerk
> Already mothered on the rack of a malarial fever.
> There are a thousand plots in the narrative
> In which grief is the hero.

"Fictions" though they are, these two poems are as vulnerable and personal as the more plain-speaking ones. And they suggest that, however odd it might seem to speak of this book in the context of Dunn's poetic "development" (the direction he has taken has been forced on him, not chosen), there are indeed continuities with the earlier work: the imaginary landscapes, with their odd mix of the "Ovidian and Gaelic", the lush and the barren, the dandyishly French and the austerely Scottish, have appeared before in *Barbarians* and *St Kilda's Parliament*. The most obvious discontinuity is the move away from a poetry concerned with class, history and culture. "Who am I", Dunn asks, "to weep for Salvador or Kampuchea / when I am made the acolyte of my own shadow?" But there is a "social" aspect to Dunn's grieving art, in that bereavement connects the poet with others. In "Reading Pascal in the Lowlands", Dunn, newly widowed, is reluctantly drawn into conversation with the father of a boy in a wheelchair:

> He is indiscreet.
> His son is eight years old, with months to live.
> His right hand trembles on the cigarette.
> He sees my book, and then he looks at me,
> Knowing me for a stranger. I have said
> I am sorry. What more is there to say?

These are perhaps the book's bleakest lines, because the moment of connection brings no consolation. There are desolate moments too in a short poem describing Dunn drunk in the street on his wedding anniversary, "starlings in my soul", and in another where he returns to the family home after weeks away to find a green loaf, bacterial cheese, withered fruit: cruel images of fleshly decomposition. Yet *Elegies* is not, overall, a morbid or depressing book. Metaphors of leaf, bloom, larksong and, above all, light commemorate the past and bring a strange buoyancy to the present. One poem describes Dunn's artist-wife holding a jam-jar filled with water up to the sun: it is a symbol of how to "write with light" and through her example the poet discovers gleams of hope and affirmation in his personal darkness. The concluding poem, though sad and chastened, also lights upon an image of great energy, the V-dart of wild geese, "instinctive, mad for home – make way! make way!"

As the poet himself remarks, "among the received notions of criticism is the belief that there should be a distance of time between a grievous personal event and writing which reflects it". Aside from some shorter and slighter pieces which might better have been omitted, this moving and measured collection shows that Dunn was right to defy the convention.

The poet James Fenton and the Poet Laureate Ted Hughes will be reading from their own work on Sunday, April 21, in the Queen Elizabeth Hall, at 7.15 pm. Tickets are £2.50 £3.50 and £5 (concessions £1 off all tickets); the box office telephone number is 01 928 8800.

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Being beauteous

Helen McNeil

JUDITH FARR
The Life and Art of Elinor Wylie
217pp. Lousiana State University Press. £27.
0807111074

Elinor Wylie's *Nets to Catch the Wind* (1921) burst upon the American literary establishment as a revelation. Edmund Wilson wrote that its brilliant style "never misses" and "its colors are always right – two qualities exceedingly rare in contemporary American verse". Wylie's next volume, *Black Armour* (1923), its title taken from Lionel Johnson, confirmed her as a poet of what Mark van Doren called "cold fire" and "perfect finish".

Praise grew; Sinclair Lewis wrote to Wylie that her aesthetic romance *Jennifer Lorn* (also 1923) had transformed American literature: "I wonder if there has ever been written a more distinguished first novel? I am so interested in it as an American phenomenon . . . . Books like it mean definitely that for the first time America has ceased to be a Colony, has become a Power." Not to be outdone, Carl Van Vechten, writing in 1933, five years after Wylie's early death, called *Jennifer Lorn* "the only sustained satire in English with which I am acquainted". (Had he not read Swift?).

Today Wylie is virtually unread by critics and academic arbiters. Nevertheless her poetry's love of the beautiful, its archaisms, fairy tales, light wit, literariness, formal control and, above all, a readily recognizable melancholic irony have made Wylie the anthology poet through whom many adolescent readers have been awakened to poetry. Theodore Roethke even declared Wylie the most significant influence on his early work.

None of the five volumes of poetry and the four romances of Wylie's energetic ten-year career is in print, and Judith Farr's discursive survey is the first book-length critique since Thomas A. Gray's dismissive *Elinor Wylie* (1969). In a national literature marked by startling upward reassessments, Wylie's reputation has followed the opposite trajectory, from fame and critical esteem to oblivion. As a consequence, her case has a complex interest, not least as, precisely, a "case".

Farr's study nods towards recent feminist theory when it proposes Wylie's life as a woman as one reason for current underestimation, the scarlet legend overshadowing the works. Sexual notoriety in a literary woman does tend to provide an excuse for not taking her work seriously, but Wylie's case is not straightforward. Her fellow luminaries have been silenced quite as definitively as she has: her enemy James Branch Cabell, her friends Carl Van Vechten, Carl Van Doren, and her third husband, William Rose Benét (of whom she remarked, with emasculating lucidity, "Will a first-class poet become a second-class poet by marrying a third-class poet?"), have all been washed away by the tide of modernism.

Wylie's set advocated a formal art of beauty, springing from Wilde, early Yeats and other Aesthetics, eighteenth-century memoirs and novels of manners and an American line of refined civility, exemplified by the native sonnet tradition from Longfellow through Frederick Goddard Tuckerman to Wylie. By drawing attention to the persistence of Aestheticism in American writing of the 1920s, Farr has not only shown the centrality of Wylie's poetry; she has also (though she does not deal with this issue) located one reason for what may otherwise seem an excessive insistence on the failure of aestheticism in modernist cultural histories like Pound's *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley*; Wylie is the other American reviser of Gautier's *Emaux et camées*.

Where Wylie's gender mattered was in her initial fame. As the pampered but ill-educated daughter of the American Solicitor-General, she was born into the world of Edith Wharton and, as Edmund Wilson remarked, she lived her early life much like Wharton, marrying young and unhappily and only writing professionally near middle age. In 1910, she left her husband, who committed suicide two years later, for the bookish (and married) millionaire Horace Wylie. With such undisguised passions, Wylie suffered more than coterie notoriety: the Chicago Journal headlined her obituary "Elinor Wylie, Poet, Figure in Sensational Elopement, Dies". Hardly had she married Wylie in 1917 than she fell in love with William Rose Benét, and, once married to Benét, she turned to England where she fell in love, unrequitedly, with Horace Woodhouse (to Benét, "Woodlouse"), to whom she addressed the plangent "One Person" sonnets of her last collection, *Angels and Earthly Creatures*.

With a husband, brother and sister suicides, and a child abandoned, Wylie lived a haunted life, marked fairly early on by the high blood-pressure that eventually killed her. In "The Coast Guard's Cottage", an eerie necrophiliac poem from *Trivial Death* (1928), the speaker asks whether her corpse-lover can be "forgiving / Of that unequal wrong / Which murdered you, and left me whole and strong?" The solution is to embrace the dead: "Come to my body".

Yet Wylie also lived the life of a public beauty, imperiously narcissistic in her designer clothes and coiffure and also inevitably deeply vulnerable. As Farr notes, Wylie exemplified the kind of woman whom Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar (in *The Madwoman in the Attic*) see as attempting "the killing of oneself into an art object". In both Wylie's poems and the anecdotes of others about her, her body is perceived as brittle, armoured, its secrets hidden. In "Where, O Where",

You shall see me no more
Though each night I hide
In your bed, at your side.

In "Sequence", three poems about a woman loved by two men, sex is a death struggle that happens "in this unlighted kennel" of a bed. Wylie was feminine in the Freudian sense: that which is not masculine. What now looks feminist in her poetry, such as a view of love as war, sprung from that feminine. It was this that made Wylie's work attractive to men; without threatening gender models, she produced poetry good enough to praise.

Significantly, in the light of Adrienne Rich's arguments about the woman poet's distance from received language, Wylie saw herself as having direct access to the English poetic tradition. I suspect this arose from two mechanisms operating in tandem. One was bitterly defensive. Literature was always a refuge for Wylie; she saw tradition as formed, and her work as part of that edifice. Her poetic conservatism is directly linked to her sexual and emotional questing. Since poetry compensated for loss and put the lie to accusations that beauty must be trivial, the English tradition needed to be kept fixed and ready for Wylie's poetry to be accepted, since her life would never be.

Wylie's second mechanism, visible in her work after 1924, was an androgynous poetic self, generated from her adulation of and identification with Shelley. Her romance *Orphan Angel* sent a wrung-out Shelley, punningly called Shiloh, on a picaresque tour of North America, where this "amazingly slip and comely creature", the "embodiment of spiritual grace", attracts the love of all who see him. Shiloh represents both the desexualized male as ideal love-object, and Wylie's idealized sense of all poetic personality, including her own.

Farr's study, sound and highly informative about Wylie's cultural context, is less confident with theory. She makes a strong case for reassessment, though Wylie might gain even more if seen as part of a female tradition which crossed the line from tradition to modernism. A number of her themes resemble those of Edna St Vincent Millay, her love of the quaint and beautiful object parallels Marianne Moore, and androgyny was one of H. D.'s solutions to the problem of beauty. 1921, the year of publication of *Nets to Catch the Wind*, was also the year that Millay's *Second April*, Moore's *Poems* and H. D.'s *Hymen* appeared.

Images of exile

Nicholas Shrimpton

MICHAEL LONG
Marvell, Nabokov: Childhood and Arcadia
270pp. Oxford University Press. £19.50.
0198128150

What can a seventeenth-century English poet (from Hull) and a twentieth-century American novelist (from St Petersburg) possibly have in common? What reader will wish to consider them together? Where on earth will librarians shelve this book? The simple answer is that these two authors share, in Michael Long's words, certain lifelong concerns: "houses, gardens, woods, water, parents, children, tutors and solitary travellers". The more sophisticated answer is that their writings can cast light, of a kind not available elsewhere, on each other's work.

The critical problems presented by the two writers are, naturally, rather different. Nabokov's reputation is still a matter of dispute. Marvell's eminence has, for the last sixty years at least, been more or less unquestioned. Long wishes to lend substance to the claim that Nabokov is a great modern novelist, and to shift the grounds on which we acknowledge and enjoy Marvell. Juxtaposing the two men is his original way of killing these two difficult birds with one deft stone.

Modernism is the term which brings them together. T. S. Eliot's rediscovery of Marvell in his famous essay of 1921 ("a tough reasonableness beneath the slight lyric grace") was both the product of, and an important contribution to, Modernist aesthetics. Nabokov, born in 1899, was a belated contributor to precisely that artistic movement. "Irony, ambiguity, equivocation, parody, self-parody, and game have", as Long points out, "dominated discussion of the two authors." In this light, the idea that they should share procedures and perceptions is less surprising than might at first appear. That they should share a topic, however, remains unexpected and this claim is crucial to Long's attempt to change our judgment of them.

The two men, he argues, are gripped by a vision of Arcadia – a childhood world, of wholeness and imaginative content. Cut off, in the one case by the English Civil War, in the other by the Russian Revolution, from the literal world of their childhood, they take such exile as the image of a universal human complaint. Marvell's Damon the Mower, Long claims audaciously, is a figure who matches "even Milton's fallen Adam" as a type of man's loss of paradise. Both writers can, none the less, also mock the exile's gloomy longing. Both writers, in their greatest works ("Upon Appleton House", *Pale Fire*), set it provokingly against an alternative, responsible vision of the good and gracious life.

One implication of this argument is that Nabokov is neither self-indulgent in tone nor merely narcissistic in topic. The other is that Marvell is not an elusive creature of irony and ambiguity but a writer with an "impassioned and compassionate sense of violation and loss".

Some readers will feel that Long is attempting to suggest value by association – Marvell's undisputed genius somehow lending dignity to Nabokov's more contentious achievement, Nabokov's autobiographical plenitude filling out, by implication, the gaps in our knowledge of Marvell the man. Others, again, will find the stance old-fashioned; Long has an Arnoldian confidence that literature is about life, and is as impatient with the claim that Nabokov's novels are "books about books" as he is with the attempt to reduce Marvell to Christian allegory. Nobody should be put off by such objections. When Long pushes his arguments too far, as he sometimes does, he is refreshingly willing to own up ("But this may be wrong"). The upshot is a robust and rousing work of the critical intelligence.

The twenty-six contributors to the *American Literary Scholarship: An Annual/1982* which is edited by J. Albert Robbins (551pp. Durham NC: Duke University Press; available in the UK through International Book Distributors. $37.75. 0 8223 0601 8) survey the critical work published in that year.

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0674165314
ROBERT L. WILKEN
The Christians As The Romans Saw Them
214pp. Yale University Press. £12.95.
0300030665
RAMSAY MacMULLEN
Christianizing the Roman Empire (A.D. 100–400)
183pp. Yale University Press. £18.
0300032161

The four books here considered all deal with different aspects of a question of rare complexity and elusiveness: how and why did it ever come about that the society of the Roman empire, initially cold and hostile, ultimately turned to Christianity and adopted the former enemy as a partner? T. D. Barnes has applied the disciplines learnt in the distinguished school of Sir Ronald Syme to the disentangling of legal, chronological and other questions, and the Variorum volume, *Early Christianity and the Roman Empire*, does well to make twenty of these detailed studies readily available in a single collection. The paperback reissue of Timothy Barnes's major book of 1981, *Constantine and Eusebius*, will widen the circle of those informed on the emperor who, more than any other single figure, played a crucial role in the immense shift from a Church under persecution and rejection to a Church whose support and intercessions were sought by emperors and governors.

Barnes does not explain the success of the Church by pointing to Constantine. He explains Constantine's by pointing to the Church. In his judgment, by early in the fourth century *the Christians* had become so numerous and influential and had penetrated so far into high places that, without their support and consent, an emperor could hardly govern with hope of success. In other words, Constantine was not the originating cause of Christian success, but saw that the Church had created a tide in affairs on which he could ride to fortune.

To think this contention an improbable overstatement is not to deny that the Christians had a significance out of proportion to their numbers, and that in some cases they had reached the top of society. That they were not negligible is demonstrated by the battle of the intellectuals against them, especially Celsus and Porphyry, on whom (together with Pliny, Galen and Julian) Robert L. Wilken writes sympathetically and wisely in *The Christians As The Romans Saw Them*. It is also demonstrated by the seriousness of the persecutions of Decius and of Diocletian. These emperors would hardly have bothered to mobilize the engines of harassment if the Christians had been, as in the late second century Celsus tried to portray them, little folk of mean education, holding obscure meetings in back rooms and never seen in places of decision and power. Celsus had demanded that the Christians accept positions of public responsibility. In the third century they did so in increasing numbers, and the more they rose to positions of influence, the more scared the pagans became. Nevertheless it seems strong language to say the emperors came to find them indispensable by the time of Diocletian. They were no political pressure group.

The Christians believed in one God possessed of great power. They were pugnacious towards polytheistic cult as gross idolatry. Having learnt from the New Testament of their duty to intercede for emperors, they had reason to urge, as Origen did, that their prayers might contribute to the good order of the empire, whose preservation of peace they much valued. It was obviously worth while seeking to have their God and therefore them on one's side. Yet even if Constantine's conversion had a good deal to do with his confidence that the Christians' God had entrusted him with a manifest destiny to rule, and to do so without superfluous colleagues, the question remains: what movements in religious feeling and general expectation made it all possible?

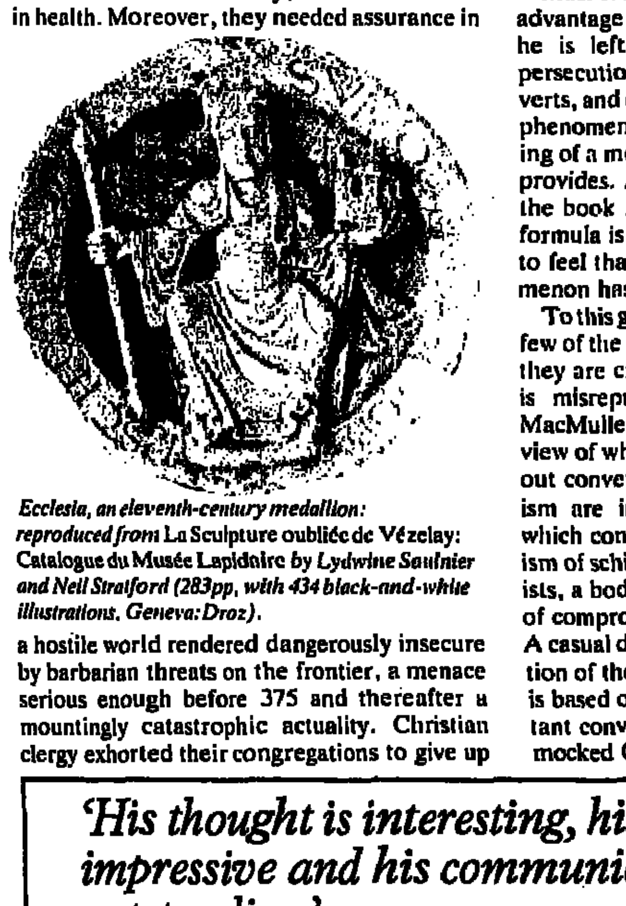
Ramsay MacMullen's short essay, *Christianizing the Roman Empire (A.D. 100–400)*, enlarged by nearly a third with tightly packed notes and a good bibliography, is almost but perhaps not quite of the quality his admirers have come to expect. He sets out to answer the question, but does not fully succeed. Gently provocative, arch in style, occasionally oracular, he argues a thesis about the conversion process, and commends his thesis to the spirit of our times by claiming to offer down-to-earth history uncorrupted by head-in-the-clouds theology. The meaning of this preference for history and elimination of theology turns out to be that in his view nothing important in the success of the Christian mission is explained by ideas or moral considerations. He pretty systematically marginalizes intellectuals wrestling with problems like creation out of nothing or with characteristic Christian obsessions like loving one's neighbour or sexual self-control. In these pages people were not converted to Christianity because they had somehow become convinced that the life of Jesus was an impressive pattern to follow or that Christian belief about human nature and destiny is true. The driving force of the shift from polytheism to monotheism MacMullen finds principally in non-moral, even in non-religious factors, to which the language of theology and ethics is treated as a mere veneer which the hard-bitten positivist historian has to strip away.

Accordingly the book's springboard is, non-controversially, the superficiality of mass movements of religious enthusiasm. From there we go on to the mixed motives of converts, especially from the time of Constantine onwards, when people might ask for baptism though their principal objective was not the remission of sins, repentance and hope of eternal life, but rather the pleasing of a rich patron, or the gaining of a lady's hand, or the longing that divine power might restore physical health. As early as Constantine's lifetime, ambitious men were alarming bishops like Eusebius of Caesarea because their professions of faith were made in hope of a good post. Pagan intellectuals were not indeed without favour at Constantine's court. In any event they too were a potent constituency he needed to keep reasonably happy. But increasingly the emperor tended to think that participation in polytheistic cult was venerating evil powers and likely to provoke the wrath of heaven against the empire.

MacMullen is certainly correct in thinking that even by 400, at the end of the Constantinian century and after a long steady pressure against paganism, the Christian population of the empire was not more than a very substantial minority. Paganism remained defensive and entrenched especially among country peasants and among the great landowners and aristocrats. The tenants who worked on the farms of such *possessores* would maintain or perhaps adopt the religion of their powerful patron, whose support they would need in facing a judge or a tax-man. Not until the end of the fourth century could the emperors venture to legislate, closing temples and prohibiting pagan sacrifices; and the effect was to engender sullen hatred of the Church in the very unreconstructed minds of conservative defenders of well-tried ways. Their hatred was inflamed by acts of violence on the part of anti-pagan zealots, who were no longer overbold individuals as in the second and third centuries or fairly small militant groups who might charge the orchestra at a pagan feast and rejoice in the crown of martyrdom. By 400 they were more systematically organized and hard to stop. Moreover, they treasured unhappy memories of pagan harassment of the churches during the short and sharp revival of polytheism under Julian. It was an age when the voices of toleration on either side of the conflict were few.

MacMullen tends to explain the phenomenon of conversion to Christianity as being, in the age prior to Constantine, a response mainly to astonishing healings and exorcisms, and then, after 312, a submission to social pressure culminating in the physical violence of the dismantling of temples in the 390s and after. That social pressure existed in the fourth century is well known and undisputed. It is harder to speak with confidence, in an area where evidence is sparse, about the number of individuals or groups brought to conversion by cures. That cures were in some cases a significant factor is not to be doubted; but it has some negative bearing on MacMullen's contentions that when in old age Augustine catalogues cures of which he has knowledge in the African churches, only two in his list are associated with the conversion process.

There is no debate that the masses who filled the churches during the fourth century expected from the Church all that they had previously looked to pagan cults to provide: ie, success in love and fertility, in commerce and in health. Moreover, they needed assurance in a hostile world rendered dangerously insecure by barbarian threats on the frontier, a menace serious enough before 375 and thereafter a mountingly catastrophic actuality. Christian clergy exhorted their congregations to give up concubines, soothsaying and divination, and forbade the observance of polytheistic festivals with amulets, astrology and rustic superstitions. Discouragement was given to folk in their pursuit of dreams, visions and miracles. Funerary beanos and hard drinking on martyrs' anniversaries were reluctantly tolerated in Africa, but not in Northern Italy. But bishops quickly found their people determined to have such things and ready to say (as Augustine reports) that "the Church's God was good for salvation in the next world, but one had better keep in with the old gods for success in this one".



Ecclesia, an eleventh-century medallion: reproduced from La Sculpture oubliée de Vézelay: Catalogue du Musée Lapidaire *by Lydwine Saulnier and Neil Stratford (283pp, with 434 black-and-white illustrations. Geneva: Droz).*

MacMullen is so insistent on the worldly advantage motivating almost all converts that he is left speechless at the evidence that persecution and martyrdom also gained converts, and can only say that it is "puzzling". The phenomenon might have provoked the drawing of a more balanced portrait than this book provides. As a collection of material, much in the book is well done, but the interpretative formula is somehow too partial for the reader to feel that *au fond* a major historical phenomenon has been seriously explained.

To this general criticism one has to add that a few of the references do not bear out just what they are cited to say. In particular Augustine is misrepresented – as if he agreed with MacMullen in taking an entirely superficial view of what constitutes conversion. Texts about conversion from polytheism to monotheism are indiscriminately merged with texts which concern the reconciliation to Catholicism of schismatic but fiercely Christian Donatists, a body very ready to suspect Catholicism of compromise with the powers of this world. A casual dictum that Augustine thought recitation of the creed enough to signify conversion is based on Augustine's description of a reluctant convert whose tongue had for years past mocked Christian belief, and who had conspic-

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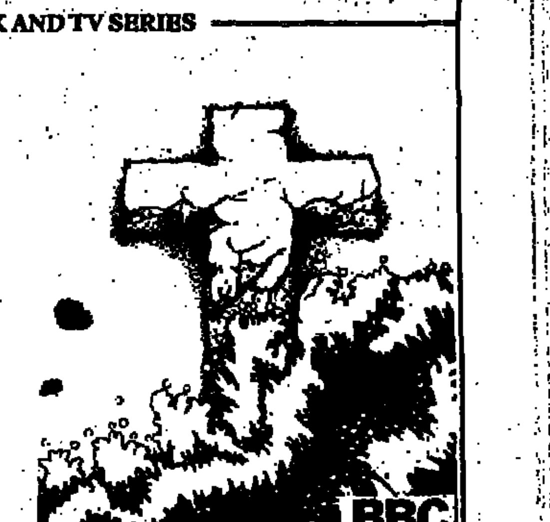

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uously failed to honour vows that, if only his daughter and then he himself could be restored to health, he would come to baptism.

Augustine often laments the half-heartedness of many who have been baptized but have not been touched to the heart, and sees an image of the Church in St Peter's ship so weighed down with fish that it began to sink. He is more than realistic about the limited and partial adherence with which many converts first come for instruction. He tells catechists that they have a duty to transform an initial fear into love, a half-insincere interest into a true devotion. In some contexts he speaks of sudden transformations of character, especially among harlots or comedians purveying blue jokes at the music-hall, but he regards such events as unusual. Granted the decisiveness of baptism, Augustine normally treats the conversion process as a lengthy growth, indeed lifelong. So his viewpoint is not accurately described in the phrase that "so long as one got the semblance of results, Augustine saw no difficulties". Moreover, the texts cited to justify this opinion concern the reconciliation of anti-pagan schismatics, and do not refer to polytheists. Augustine's famous twenty-fourth sermon, preached at Carthage in 399, is mistakenly interpreted to be a rabble-rouser, when its intention was to tranquillize an excited *plebs* who had heard of anti-pagan moves at Rome, had knocked a beard off a statue of Hercules and scorned their African bishops as dragging their feet in the combat. Augustine tells them to calm down and to inflict no knocks on their pagan neighbours.

Ramsay MacMullen has written an instructive and enjoyable book on a great theme, even if not all the facts are quite correct, and if there are large questions to be put to the method by which theology and ethics are systematically excluded. But good use is made of archaeological material. It is a pity that in a field where inscriptions would normally offer crucial evidence, they fail to provide answers to the central question here under debate.

Tendencies and divisions

Peter Garnsey

W.H.C. FREND
The Rise of Christianity
1,022pp. Darton, Longman and Todd. £35.
0 252 513147

This large and impressive volume traces the history of the Christian Church from its inception to the early seventh century. The structure of *The Rise of Christianity* is broadly chronological, but W. H. C. Frend has rejected narrative history, preferring to highlight certain key themes and pursue them through the centuries of the Church's early growth: how and why Christianity achieved its success, the nature of Christian civilization, with special attention to the development of divergent traditions within the Church, and the Church's influence in later ages in the realm of ideas and values. Of these themes the last plays a small part: inevitably, in a work in which about 750 years are covered in fewer than 700 pages of text, Frend can do little more than, for example, point to early anticipations of the medieval doctrine of the Two Swords, signal possible survivals of Gnostic dualism (see below), or comment wryly on the influence of some of Augustine's less attractive doctrines on the Church in the Middle Ages.

The strength of the book lies in the exposition of the second theme. Frend has advertised his interest and expertise in the study of non-orthodox Christianity in two earlier substantial works, *The Donatist Church* (1952) and *The Rise of the Monophysites* (1972). In the first, he uses archaeological as well as literary evidence to set the "Church of the Martyrs" in a social and economic environment, the Numidian countryside in the fourth and fifth centuries. In the second, his control of difficult source material and understanding of regional differences within the Eastern Empire in terms of culture and tradition combine to demonstrate the part played by social and political as well as doctrinal factors – the nature or natures of Christ – in the emergence of Monophysitism as a third religious force in the Mediterranean alongside the Roman and Orthodox Churches. The present work advances in condensed form the main conclusions of these studies, but the coverage is here extended to include the whole range of divergent tendencies and divisions within the Church in the post-Constantinian period.

Moreover, in the two decades that have elapsed since the appearance of his other major work, *Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church: A study of a conflict from the Maccabees to Donatus* (1965), Frend has developed and refined his account of the differing strands in pre-Constantinian Christianity, and in particular of Gnosticism. His discussion of Gnosticism is up to date rather than novel, drawing on the growing literature surrounding the recently discovered Sethite library of Nag Hammadi; but few scholars working in this field would have the knowledge and the daring to write sentences such as the following:

> Gnosticism may claim its place in the history of Christian civilization. Its dualism influenced directly the ideas of Priscillian in Spain near the end of the fourth century; his followers can best be described as "neo-gnostics". Manichaeism and the religion of the medieval Bogomils and Cathari may also look back to Gnostic dualism as their ancestor. Its attempted harmonization of Jewish and Platonic ideas affected the whole range of Alexandrian theology and exegesis from the time of Origen onwards. Beyond the frontiers of Alexandrian orthodoxy, one may detect some Gnostic influence in the thought of Apollinaris of Laodicea (c.310–90), as did his contemporaries. Monophysites, such as James of Sarug in the sixth century, also accepted the Gnostic view of the wholly spiritual Christ whose flesh was a disguise aimed at deceiving the world rulers from whose servitude humanity must be freed. The Monophysites also, like the Priscillianites and Manichees, made frequent use of the Gnostic apocryphal legends, particularly the Gnostic Infancy narratives. Throughout the whole of the Christian East popular piety was sustained by these romances that proliferated in the second half of the second century. The most famous, the Protevangelium of James, provided the inspiration and material for some of the beautiful frescoes seen on the walls of many medieval Byzantine churches. From Ethiopia to the Balkan principalities, the Gnostic tradition remained close to the hearts of devout Christian people. The early Christian romantic and mystical tradition owed much to the Gnostics.

This is a typically bold example of the author's skill at finding connections and similarities between ideas that emerge in different historical settings. Other examples, familiar to readers of Frend, involve not so much doctrine as attitudes to the secular authorities and to society at large. The broad dichotomies between "Eastern" and "Western", or "urban" and "rural" Christian outlooks are organizing themes of this work as of its predecessors.

Frend has produced a powerful and coherent account of Christian disunity. But the book is entitled *The Rise of Christianity*, and the primary question is and must be "How and why did Christianity become the religion of the Greco-Roman world?" It may be felt that Frend's secondary theme is too dominant, or becomes dominant too early, from the analysis of the conversion of Constantine. In contemporary scholarship the fourth century is invariably seen as a period of competition and confrontation between Christianity and paganism. In the present account, however, there is no contest at all. Paganism is brought into the centre of the stage only in the section on Julian, but the reign of Julian is treated as a mere hiccup, or as Athanasius put it, speaking hopefully if prophetically, "a passing cloud". However, not all members of the ecclesiastical establishment of the time would have shared his insouciance. In a little over a decade Ambrose was Bishop of Milan, the equal of Julian in zeal and force of personality, and his superior in strategy. He exacted from a series of weak and pious emperors a series of measures designed to prevent the arrival of another Julian – the abandonment of toleration, the disestablishment of the state (pagan) cults and the outlawing of paganism.

For Frend, Ambrose was unnecessary; more crucially, the Church would have triumphed without Constantine. Christianity was powerfully placed by the end of the third century, having "penetrated to every corner of the empire and to almost every section of the population" and having "become the most important single force in many parts of the empire". The expansion of the Church at the expense of paganism in the post-Constantinian period can be treated as of secondary interest if the battle has already been fought and won. Frend finds no need to explore the rich texture of late Roman paganism, or for that matter to dwell on the less attractive aspects of the Church's growth – the part played by material considerations in swelling the numbers of the faithful, or the incidence of conversion by duress.

The optimistic view of the progress of the Church is derived from von Harnack, whose classic *Die Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums in der ersten drei Jahrhunderten*, first published in 1902, was the "real inspiration" of Frend's book. On the other hand, another scholar whose influence is frequently acknowledged, Norman Baynes, conjectured that Christianity was the faith of perhaps one-tenth of Constantine's subjects in 312; this estimate is also based on von Harnack's work, and signals for Baynes the insignificance of the Church at this juncture. Henry Chadwick is in agreement: "The Church was not nearly numerous or influential enough to be a source of political power. In 300, it remained a small minority group, especially in the West."

The true position of the Christian Church at the turn of the third century is impossible to define. The sources are thin, and the straightforward explanation of this may also be the correct one: Christianity did not impinge much on the world, at least until the mid to late third century. We do not have to believe that before that time emperors or leading statesmen exercised themselves much over the Christian Church – or that Christianity made converts among people of rank and influence, or for that matter made much impact among the mass of the peasantry in what was overwhelmingly an agrarian society. The credibility of such sources as there are – the list of writers who pass over Christianity for the Severan period alone, when Christianity is said to have "take off", includes the historians Cassius Dio and Herodian and the biographer and courtier Philostratus – has been undermined by a wealth of recent scholarship. It is curious how little impact this intense scholarly activity has made on *The Rise of Christianity*. Frend deals no more sceptically with the unsupported assertions of, for example, Eusebius and the notoriously untrustworthy *Historia Augusta*, not to mention Tertullian, than he did in *Martyrdom and Persecution*. In this respect his pages on the persecution of Decius, for example, form a sharp contrast with the summary account of G. W. Clarke in the introduction to his edition of the *Letters of St Cyprian* (1984). The general historian – and Frend will be the first to agree that Christianity must be set in its social, political and religious context – will notice in addition bibliographical lacunae, an over-reliance on old, if worthy, literature (Charlesworth's *The Roman Empire*, 1951, has long ceased to be "the best short guide to the Roman empire"), some strange, if not always important, errors (Suetonius as "another senatorial historian") and some curious historical generalizations, such as the following:

> The cities lived off the countryside and the Romanized provincials off the backs of the peasants. These were the subject populations, such as the "Penestae" of Thessaly, the "Pedies" of Priene, the Helots of Sparta, peoples conquered in ancient wars and now paying poll taxes and whatever was demanded from them for the upkeep of the cities.

A work on the rise of Christianity from Augustus to Justinian and beyond demands a degree of mastery of secular history, the history of non-Christian religion and ecclesiastical history which is beyond the reach of any one man. There is, however, much to admire in this book: the comprehensive survey of the complex, often baffling subject of Christian disunity which it contains, the massive erudition, the firm structure and organization, the exploitation of archaeological as well as literary evidence which is unusual in a work of ecclesiastical history, and the lively, colourful style.

The Making of Mark: The scriptural bases of the earliest gospel, Volumes I, From Jesus' baptism to Peter's recognition and *II, From the Transfiguration to the Anastasis* has been published by P. Drinkwater, 56 Church Street, Shipston-on-Stour, Warwickshire (351pp. £17.50 the set. 0 646643 05 9).

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Salvation in translation

Marc Raeff

C. R. BAWDEN
Shamans, Lamas and Evangelicals: The English missionaries in Siberia
382pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul. £29.50.
0 7102 0064 1

The spiritualist and evangelical revivalism of the eighteenth century, reinforced by the Enlightenment's commitment to knowledge as the gateway to truth and happiness, made the nineteenth century the heroic age of Protestant missions *in partibus infidelium*. The spread of the British empire opened up vast fields of action to the London Missionary Society, so that religious, economic, intellectual and political factors became inextricably tied into a web of interrelated (though not always harmonious) interests and concerns. The English Evangelical missions were predicated on the belief that the way to salvation passed through direct acquaintance with the Scriptures. To this end, the missionary had first to learn the local language in order to translate the Scriptures; he then had to disseminate and explicate their message by his preaching and teaching and, incidentally, assist in promoting the material and physical progress of those he converted. The missionaries' prime task was thus to make the Scriptures available, and it was the purpose of the British and Foreign Bible Society to translate and publish the Gospel in every language possible.

In 1814, the London Missionary Society, in conjunction with the British and Foreign Bible Society, started preparations for a mission to the Buriat Mongols, and in 1818 its missionaries took the long route to Irkutsk. Eventually they established themselves in the Selenginsk area of Transbaikalia. The path seemed to have been paved by the mission of the Moravian Brothers to the Kalmyks (a Mongolian speaking people) on the Lower Volga, and the subsequent moving of some Kalmyk clans to Siberia. Part of the New Testament had been translated at the Moravian mission into Kalmyk, and it was believed (erroneously as it happened) that the Buriat Mongols would have easy access to it, and that the task of translating the entire Bible into Mongolian would be thus facilitated. Furthermore, the inroads that, since the early eighteenth century, lamaist Buddhism had made among the Mongolian clans clearly indicated the need of more sophisticated religion among the shamanist Buriat Mongols.

There was also the happy circumstance – most crucial to the enterprise – that Emperor Alexander I had undergone a religious crisis which had led him to establish a Russian branch of the Bible Society and to encourage the dissemination of the Gospel among the peoples of his empire. At the behest of the Emperor, the Governor of Irkutsk (N. I. Treskin) and the reforming Governor General of Siberia (M. M. Speransky) also gave active support to the missionary efforts. The Directors of the London Missionary Society also believed that conversion of the Buriat Mongols might be an effective avenue for spreading Christianity to China, while the Russian government hoped to find in conversion a means for neutralizing the influence of the nomads of Outer Mongolia who were constantly crossing the borders into their empire. Although the Russian Church hierarchy did not view the Protestant efforts at spreading the Scriptures too favourably, it had an energetic missionary programme of its own and did not actively interfere with a mission that had the support of the Emperor.

The history of the English mission to the Buriats has long since been known in outline, thanks to travellers' reports in the nineteenth century and brief mention in studies on Siberia based on Russian sources. But in *Shamans, Lamas and Evangelicals* C. R. Bawden has written the first full "inside" account of the life and activities of these English missionaries in Siberia on the basis of the extensive documentation in the archives of the London Missionary and the British and Foreign Bible Societies. His thorough knowledge of the Mongolian dimension enables him to give a full history of the beginnings and pioneers of Mongolian studies – a field of scholarship that owed much of its inception to the translation and printing activities of the English missionaries.

Professor Bawden follows up all the available evidence; as a result we have full-size portraits of the missionaries – Edward Stallybrass, William Swan, Robert Yuille, Cornelius Rahmn – and of their wives. We are given a feel for their daily life in Siberia, the harsh circumstances and family sorrows. Bawden lets the personal documents – primarily letters and diaries – speak for themselves (there are also some interesting contemporary illustrations). This means that most issues are seen from the point of view of the missionaries and their superiors. He traces, in minute detail, the complex relations of the missionaries in the field with the offices in St Petersburg and London on the one hand, and with the Russian authorities on the other. Unfortunately, because he relies mainly on the English societies' archives, Bawden cannot give as comprehensive a picture as one would like of the "objects" of the missionary efforts, the Buriat Mongols, although we are afforded a few interesting and tantalizing glimpses; nor does he give more than a most sketchy impression of the Russian-Siberian environment with which the missionaries and their families had to contend. Yet the sympathetic, albeit far from uncritical, portrait of the missionaries and their families goes a long way towards illustrating nineteenth-century West European "mentalities" and in explaining our century's revolt against imperialism and "Victorianism".

The mission lasted until 1840, when it was expelled by the Russian government. From the beginning the missionaries had laboured under a basic handicap: under Russian law, a "heathen" or Muslim might be converted only to Russian Orthodoxy, and he could not join any other Christian denomination. Thus all efforts of the English missionaries led to a dead end: they might impart knowledge of the Scriptures, but they could not accept their converts into their congregation. Accused of violating the law on conversion, they were eventually forced to leave their mission after they had lost their major patrons in St Petersburg – Alexander I and Speransky. Thus the Englishmen's task had been limited first to translating and printing the Scriptures, and secondly, to making these translations and commentary-tracts available to the Buriats by preaching the Gospel and establishing schools for a few Buriat children. They succeeded in the former – laying the groundwork for the scholarly study of Mongolian – but were less than successful in the latter. It may be noted that, ironically, the development of Buriat "national" (or cultural) consciousness later in the century was indirectly furthered by the work of the missionaries.

Bawden recognizes, however, that the main reason for the missionaries' failure was their refusal to compromise with the cultural values of lamaist Buddhism that had become dominant among the Buriat Mongols. They insisted on one Truth, as opposed to the Buddhist syncretism that more easily accommodated itself to shamanist attitudes and ways.

Another consequence of Professor Bawden's sticking closely to his sources is that it is not always easy for the reader to follow the complex relationships and varied problems involving the mission; it also makes for occasional repetition and slips on matters Russian. But these are very minor blemishes in a most fascinating account of a little-known – but revealing – episode in the history of both modern religion and scholarship.

Recently published in the Religious Traditions of the World series is its editor, H. Byron Earhart's *Religions of Japan: Many traditions within one sacred way* (142pp. Harper and Row. Paperback, £4.95. 0 06 062112 5).

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Behind the lines

Robert Hewison

Shortly after Easter a notice will appear outside the Sheriff's Office at the Court House at Lanark. On it will be stated the time and place for sale, under warrant, of artworks which were seized in 1983 from the home of the poet Ian Hamilton Finlay because he refuses to pay rates demanded of him by Strathclyde Regional Council. The War of Little Sparta is moving towards a climax, and Finlay finds himself without support from the official guardians of culture. The Scottish Arts Council has washed its hands of the affair, having decided the issue is "a matter of legal interpretation outwith its own remit". Lord Gowrie has written: "it is clear that, much as I admire you and your work, this is not a matter in which I, as Arts Minister, can interfere".

Readers of this column will recall that Finlay refuses to pay rates on the grounds that his property is a garden-temple, and therefore exempt as a religious building under the Rating Act (Scotland) 1956. The Scottish Arts Council were instrumental in having that description confirmed by the rating assessor, but Strathclyde Regional Council are implacable in their insistence that Finlay pay rates on what they orginally considered to be a commercial art gallery. The sums claimed now amount to several thousand pounds, and the Sheriff Officer told me that the sale of the distrained goods will definitely take place in April.

The universal, official advice to Finlay is that he should hire a solicitor. This he refuses to do: he cannot afford the fees, any more than the rates. But the issue is larger than that; "a citizen should not have to go to court before the proper bureaucratic procedures have been followed. The people have a right to rigorous bureaucracy." A solicitor would know far less than Finlay does about garden-temples; he has made all the correct submissions, but Strathclyde will not consider them, not even visit the property.

Finlay does not expect the Scottish Arts Council to decide on the legal issues involved. What disgusts him is that they refuse to make any pronouncement on the cultural context of the building. It is their duty under their charter "to fill in the cultural blanks in the Region's understanding", but the SAC has evaded the issue. "The point is, does the law assume the existence of culture or not? Is it the case that culture has nothing to say to the law?" By avoiding its responsibilities in the purely cultural field the SAC is undermining language and legality. Finlay has no quarrel with the law itself, and is only concerned with its correct application.

"It has all come down to an interminable, obscene debate about the arts and money, no one talks about truth and justice and beauty and all those unfashionable things." Much of Finlay's current work is now "Official War Art", an emblematization of the War of Little Sparta. He has not, however, entirely lost his sense of humour: he suggested that, since the Scottish Arts Council think he should hire a solicitor, he might apply for a grant to get one.

* * *

The National Campaign for the Arts has given a clear indication of its future thrust with the appointment of twenty-nine-year-old Simon Crine as its first director. Crine has no experience of the arts, either as a practitioner or administrator, but he is very familiar with the corridors of power at Westminster, having worked for the Low Pay Unit, as a political adviser to a Labour MP, and most recently as parliamentary officer for the Local Government Campaign Unit.

The National Campaign for the Arts is the first ever attempt to unite all the disparate voices and accents of the arts world into an effective chorus of protest at the decline in public funding for the arts. Crine, a history graduate from York, sees his inexperience in arts administration as an advantage: "I don't intend to get dragged into squabbles between particular art forms." His first priority is "to push the arts up the political agenda at Westminster – at present they rate about ninety-ninth out of 100."

Crine says there are "no *ifs* and *buts* about the need for an increase in public expenditure on the arts. Because we are starting from such a low base, I would like to see an immediate increase of 20 per cent on last year's figures. The Arts Council asked for 20 per cent (which it didn't get); I believe was should have that all round." To achieve such an increase requires a Minister for the Arts in the Cabinet who speaks for the arts alone. Crine believes that local authorities should have a statutory – as opposed to voluntary – responsibility for the arts. "What we need is a proper local structure – many authorities don't have such things as arts officers or committees." He would like to see tax concessions for individuals who patronize the arts, but he is outrightly critical of those who see business sponsorship as a solution to funding problems.

He will be pressing these proposals on all parties equally, but he sees it as inevitable that the arts will become a hotter political issue between them: "That is how lobbies work, by raising the stakes in each party." In order to achieve his aims, he is prepared to use whatever methods prove necessary – from discreet discussions to public protest – but he is aware that the National Campaign for the Arts will only gain respect through the quality of the research it undertakes to support its arguments. It is ironic, then, that a body dedicated to improving arts funding should immediately face a funding crisis. At present Crine has no office and no staff, and the £50,000 raised for the first year's work is plainly insufficient. Funds currently come from a number of "umbrella" arts organizations, but from next year the National Campaign will depend on members' subscriptions. Crine proposes a £10 subscription for individuals, and a sliding scale for organizations from £20 to £2,500. But will anybody invest?

"It is going to call for a longer term view than artists tend usually to take. I don't know if the arts world is going to back the campaign, but if they don't, the chance won't come again for another twenty years. The pressures are never going to be greater than they are now."

* * *

The first ever work of fiction written in Cornish will be on display on Saturday at the London Welsh Centre in the Gray's Inn Road when sixty Celtic-language publishers and organizations meet for *Scrif-Celt*, itself the first ever Celtic book fair and conference on contemporary Celtic writing. Melville Bennetto's *An Gurun Wosek a Geltya* (The Bloody Crown of the Celts) was published by Dyllansow Truran earlier this year (139pp. £4.95. 1 85022 000 X), and is a political thriller that ranges from Belfast to an asssassination attempt on the Prince of Wales at an eisteddfod, in order to dramatize the struggle for survival of all six Celtic languages: Irish, Manx, Scottish Gaelic, Welsh, Cornish and Breton. While Irish is an official language of the EEC, Breton is actively discouraged under French law, and there are fewer than 500 people fluent in Manx.

The publisher of *An Gurun Wosek a Geltya*, Len Truran, admits that he was taking a risk to print 750 copies of a novel when there are hardly more than a thousand Cornish speakers, but he is convinced that a revival of Cornish is under way. He has published ninety-five books on Cornish themes since he began Dyllansow Truran four-and-a-half years ago. The novelist and historian Peter Berresford Ellis, who will be chairing the *Scrif-Celt* conference, says that the intention is not to dwell on the oppressed state of the Celtic languages, but to show the liveliness of current Celtic writing.

* * *

The literary festival season opens this month with Lancaster's "Writing '85" from April 28 to May 6. It closes seven festivals later with the Newcastle Literature Festival from October 21 to November 3. Casting a critical eye over the festival programmes will be Jonathan Vickers of the National Sound Archive. He has been recording literary events for the British Library's collection of "spoken literature" for five years now, but this is the first time that he will attend all the literary festivals. Following Lancaster, he and his tape recorder will be at the Berkshire Poetry Festival (May 12–27), Bath (May 24–June 9), the Cambridge Poetry Festival (June 14–16), the Edinburgh Book Festival (August 10–25), Shrewsbury Poetry Festival (September 14–21), Cheltenham (October 5–13, Kent (October 16–20) and Newcastle.

By the end of October Vickers will have added a hundred hours to the National Sound Archive. He tries to record poets and writers both reading from their works and in spontaneous discussion. He has already taped more than a thousand voices, and it is very rare for a speaker to refuse permission to record. Ted Hughes is rigorous in his refusal, though he does not seem to be concerned by the hundreds of bootleg recordings made by admirers in his audiences.

Denise Levertov stars at the Berkshire and Cambridge Poetry Festivals; Seamus Heaney reads at Cambridge, and speaks and is spoken about at Cheltenham. Cheltenham, the senior festival (whose poetry prize is being run jointly with the *TLS*), will be centred on a theme, "The Spirit of Place in Literature". Side-shows will include a marathon reading of as much of Wordsworth's *Prelude* as can be fitted into four hours. Jonathan Vickers can miss that event, but a wise man would note that Lord Gowrie's reading at Shrewsbury on September 14.

AMONG THIS WEEK'S CONTRIBUTORS

Tom Baker is the Dean of Worcester.

David Budgen is a lecturer in Russian at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, London.

Glen Cavaliero is the author of *A Reading of E. M. Forster*, 1979.

Henry Chadwick is Regius Professor Emeritus of Divinity at the University of Cambridge.

Nigel Clive is a former member of HM Diplomatic Service.

Delia Davin's *Woman-work: Women and the party in revolutionary China*, appeared in 1976.

John Drury's *The Parables in the Gospels: History and allegory* will be published later this year.

Peter Garnsey is a lecturer in History at the University of Cambridge.

Mark Girouard's books include *The Victorian Country House*, 1971; new edition, 1980.

Victoria Glendinning's biography of Vita Sackville-West was published in 1983.

Robert Hewison's edition of John Ruskin's *Catalogue of the Rudimentary Series* was published earlier this year.

J. L. Houlden is a lecturer in New Testament Studies at King's College, London.

Bruce Lenman is Reader in Modern History at the University of St Andrews.

Shirley Robin Letwin's most recent book is *The Gentleman in Trollope: Individuality and moral conduct*, 1982.

Donald M. MacKinnon was Norris-Hulse Professor of Divinity at the University of Cambridge from 1960 to 1978.

Helen McNeill teaches English and American Studies at the University of East Anglia.

Blake Morrison's collection of poems, *Dark Glasses*, was published last year.

Marc Raeff is Bakhmeteff Professor of Russian Studies at Columbia University.

Bryan Ranft's most recent book is *The Sea in Soviet Strategy*, 1983.

Tapan Raychaudhuri is Reader in Modern South Asian History at the University of Oxford.

Alan Sheridan is the author of *Michel Foucault: The will to truth*, 1980.

T. C. Smout's books include *A History of the Scottish People, 1560–1830*.

Zara Steiner's books include *The Foreign Office and Foreign Policy, 1889–1914*, 1969.

Charles Thomas's *Christianity in Roman Britain to AD 500* was published in 1981.

J. A. Turner's *Lloyd George's Secretariat* was published in 1980.

Dick Wilson's biography of Zhou Enlai was published last year.

Letters

Subsidizing Literature

Sir, – I do not want to enter upon the delicate question of who should get what from public funds. The discussion on the subject does, however, make one wonder how the production of good writing *can* be promoted. Does anyone know?

As to poetry, there is surely no need to encourage it? Anyone who has poems to write will certainly write them, and surely the less of the other stuff there is, the better? The first need of the young who might be poets is not to print what they write, or to give "poetry readings", or to go to "poetry workshops" or courses, but to meet some of the good writing of the past, all the best poets being dead. What is needed for this is well-stocked libraries and well-stocked bookshops.

C. H. SISSON.
Moorfield Cottage, The Hill, Langport, Somerset.

Sir, – Nicholas Shrimpton (March 15) rightly points out that British authors have for over a century subsidized literature through our free public library system. With the contraction of state support for literature (happily not so in Scotland where writers still flourish as the bay) and these unfavourable times for literature in the market place, perhaps I could draw your readers' attention to yet another example of authors' "extraordinary and inappropriate altruism"?

I refer to the question of review copies – a system that has been in existence for as long as the press have deigned to notice books. With the recent increase in literary periodicals, the number of copies now sent out must be considerable. Say, of a literary novel or biography selling in the shops for £10, at least fifty review copies would be dispatched by a zealous publisher's publicity department. In a good month, during the spring or autumn seasons, we are therefore talking of a net loss to publishers of at least £30,000 and for authors perhaps £5,000 in lost royalties.

Now, in today's bracing economic climate such profligacy seems extraordinary (the losses from illegal photocopying are surely a trifle by comparison). The question must be just what appropriate steps can be taken to recover some of this loss from the beneficiaries, viz the reviewers and their literary editors? If we had such a thing as a Value Subtracted Tax this would indeed be a simple matter. Setting levity aside, it is a well-known fact that these same subsidized reviewers not only get handsomely paid for what they write (and this is not always favourable) but they also frequently deal with certain second-hand bookshops which offer 25 per cent off the selling price. This lucrative black market surely must be of considerable interest to the Inland Revenue and the extent of the unearned income impossible to guess at.

Shrimpton's proposal to transfer the assets of the lamented Literature Department into the PLR Fund is a capital idea, especially if bolstered by a swingeing levy on covert photocopying, but a system of licensing should also be introduced forthwith for book reviewers – to include only those of wholesome opinions whose writings could be guaranteed to improve the general taste and culture of the nation. With this approved list it would be a simple matter for the Chancellor to raise extra literary revenue by approved fiscal means each Budget Day. The tax would, of course, be levied only on those review copies that the critic patently had not read from cover to cover. Those read and reviewed could perhaps be classed as zero-rated. Might this not be a practical means of ensuring in these straitened times that Britain's authors receive their due rewards?

SIMON BERRY.
126 West Princes Street, Glasgow.

'The Power of the Press?'

Sir, – I was surprised to read in Michael Davie's review of my book *The Power of the Press?* that I gave no English examples of how news reports affect events. May I remind him of a few?

The Times report of the Peterloo Massacre made the cause of parliamentary reform a national issue overnight (p 22). William Howard Russell's reporting of the Crimean War in the same newspaper forced the government to resign, led to wide-ranging army reforms and persuaded Florence Nightingale to take her nurses to Scutari (p 29). The Criminal Law Amendment Bill was only enacted after the *Pall Mall Gazette* had investigated child prostitution in London (p 57).

That was one reason why I was wondering if Davie had bothered to read the book, and there is another. What he dismisses as a potted history of newspapers in Britain and the United States – I also included Australia – was an attempt to establish that newspaper proprietors have rarely had the power to dictate events and make or unmake governments.

They had influence, of course, but men such as Northcliffe, Rothermere, Beaverbrook, Hearst and McCormick did not wield such power. Hence the conclusion that "if the press has any power it is as a conduit of news, and not as the voice of those who run it". I believe that there would be less unhealthy suspicion of the press – which is fostered by the left – if this was more widely understood.

As for Watergate, the editor of *The Times* did indeed regard Nixon as a president worthy of support. There was nothing I could do about it, in part because he first stated this opinion in a speech at the National Press Club in Washington while I was editing the paper in Washington. However, as deputy editor with responsibility for foreign news I ensured that Watergate was fully covered in the news columns where the power of the press resides.

LOUIS HEREN.
Fleet House, Vale of Health, London NW3.

'The Tragedy of Political Science'

Sir, – David Ricci's book *The Tragedy of Political Science*, which I reviewed in your columns (March 8), contained reasonable criticisms of American political science to which I tried to offer a reasonable rejoinder. Philip Grant's letter (March 29) attacks American political science from a totally different perspective, that of left-wing ideology. To justify his assertion that American political science is corrupt (a very serious charge), he quotes from Noam Chomsky and other supporters of the North Vietnamese cause in the Vietnam war, who attacked those leaders of political science in America who were either impartial in their attitude to that war or were sympathetic to the cause of South Vietnam.

Much that was said by Chomsky and his allies seemed to foreign observers like myself to be unjust and unsound, and Dr Grant's letter, coming from the American University in Beirut, is a striking example of what Kenneth Minogue in his recent book on ideology diagnoses as "American self-hatred", a morbid symptom of ideological thinking.

MAURICE CRANSTON.
London School of Economics, Houghton Street, London WC2.

A Browning Edition

Sir, – I am baffled by Michael Mason's remark, in his review of the first two volumes of *The Brownings' Correspondence* (March 8), that the Oxford English Texts edition of *The Poetical Works of Robert Browning* "is coming out . . . in the wrong order". Unless he believes that we should have begun with *Asolando* and worked backwards, this appears to make no sense. Volume I, containing *Pauline* and *Paracelsus*, appeared in 1983: Volume II, containing *Strafford* and *Sordello*, in 1984.

That the edition as a whole is coming out "slowly" will surprise no one who is familiar with the history of complex editions. We hope to send Volume III to the Press early next year, Volume IV a few months later, and are assured that the long delay at the printers which held up the publication of the first two volumes will not recur. Relatively soon, therefore, we shall have edited the whole of the *Bells and Pomegranates* series, including all the plays as well as the *Dramatic Lyrics* and *Dramatic Romances and Lyrics*. We look forward to the exciting task of editing *Men and Women* and *Dramatis Personae*.

IAN JACK.
Pembroke College, Cambridge.

'Mansfield Park'

Sir, – R. D. Pepper's contention (Letters, March 1) that Mme Cottin's novel *Amélie Mansfield* influenced Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park* is convincing. That it has only recently been "discovered" that there is a Mansfield Park and a Sir Thomas to go with it in Richardson's *Sir Charles Grandison* is an example of an axiom in Jane Austen scholarship: don't look for the obvious. Thus her habit of playing games with names, both of places and people, has been ignored. There is at least one more Mansfield link, the town of that name in Nottinghamshire; the adjoining town of Mansfield Woodhouse gave us the surname of the heroine of the next novel, Emma.

Your correspondent pointed out that Amélie Mansfield seemed to have something in common with both Mary Crawford and Fanny Price. So does Amelia Wildenhaim in *Lovers' Vows*. Mrs Inchbald's version of Kotzebue's play reached its fifth edition in 1798; on December 31, 1797, as a result, it has been suggested, of Steventon theatricals, Jane Austen's brother Henry married the "charming" Eliza de Feuillide (R. D. Pepper applies the adjective both to her and to Mary Crawford), instead of the worthy but perhaps dull Martha Lloyd his mother would have preferred. Eliza was said to have rejected James Austen because he was a clergyman; he married a Mary soon after. Eliza was ten years older than Henry, and gave him no children, in a family of hard-worked wives. The play and Henry's marriage are, I believe, the basis of *Mansfield Park*.

First, however, we have *Lady Susan* (1803?) which Q. D. Leavis thought a first sketch for *Mansfield Park*. The scheming Lady Susan (Mary Crawford) pursues the attractive Reginald de Courcy (Henry/Edmund) who is twelve years younger than she. Reginald eventually finds he can love and marry Frederica, Lady Susan's quiet and virtuous daughter. The pattern is similar in *Mansfield Park*, but the significant age-gap has disappeared.

Suggestions that Henry Austen was the model for Henry Crawford have usually been dismissed scornfully. But if there was no connection, why did his sister use his name? Or the name of her favourite niece, Fanny Knight? Or, in other novels, the names of her other brothers? Or, for that matter, her own for those two pale Janes, Bennet and Fairfax? Then too there was the juvenile novel *Henry and Eliza*, written well before the death of Eliza's first husband on the guillotine in 1794. The fictional couple spend three years in France; there is even a play on Eliza's maiden name of Hancock: as a baby she is found in a Haycock (capital letter and all).

Eliza de Feuillide was a gay, witty, playloving woman. References to her in Jane Austen's letters after her marriage to Henry are few and unemotional, unlike the warmth of her plentiful remarks about Henry. If, like her mother, Jane Austen disapproved of the marriage, Fanny Price's shocked opinion of *Lovers' Vows* and Sir Thomas Bertram's disapproval of amateur dramatics become more explicable, even if we cannot believe in those Steventon performances in 1797.

In January 1813 Jane Austen was considering "Ordination" as the subject of *Mansfield Park*. Henry, we are told, had considered it for himself in the early 1790s, before he became a militia officer and then a banker. In April 1813 Eliza died, the next year *Mansfield Park* was published, and two years later Henry became bankrupt – and was ordained. The London-loving Eliza would not have liked it. In the novel Edmund (Henry *and* James Austen) makes the sort of marriage Jane Austen would have wished for Henry; she was reliving the past as it might have been for her brilliant but disappointing brother.

The source material of other writers has long been considered worthy of systematic study. That Jane Austen's material largely existed in the life around her is a reason for caution, but not for ignoring it.

ALLAN WILKINSON.
15 Manor Drive, Southgate, London N14.

The price of Otto Demus's *The Mosaics of San Marco in Venice* is £299 and not £215 as was stated in our review of March 22.

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A view of the hills

Tapan Raychaudhuri

A Passage to India
Various cinemas

A Passage to India is remarkably easy to watch. One is hardly aware of its very considerable length; not a moment of boredom, which is more than could be said of David Lean's *Dr Zhivago*. The characters, old acquaintances from one's days of adolescence, come to life on the screen, for the most part convincing and all acted out beautifully. As with the novel, some at least of the vivid impressions will stay in the imagination for ever. This is more than one normally gets from an evening's entertainment. There is also Peggy Ashcroft as Mrs Moore. Her portrayal of a hesitant, self-effacing, at times exasperating, old lady dominates the film, even through the long stretches when she is not there. And who can resist Lean's photogenic India in technicolor – the Himalayan peaks, Kashmir lakes, bazaars overflowing with tropical fruits and even the specially created rain-forest complete with ruined temples and erotic sculpture? It is pure enchantment; a splendid film.

In fact it is so splendid that carping comments of any sort seem ungenerous. Yet it is flawed. It is unfair to expect complete accuracy in matters of detail in a feature film in English which has for its background an Indian town in the 1920s. But one hopes to watch it without actually wincing. Unfortunately, I found myself wincing oftener than I can recall. Aziz, a highly decorous north Indian Muslim, on his first visit to an English home, goes and sits on his host's bed and draws up his feet, *shoes and all*. It is difficult to explain the absurdity of this scene. If General Outram in Satyajit Ray's film *The Chess Players* were shown eating a plateful of peas with a table knife, that would be a fair parallel. Then the "bridge party", with the assembled Indian gentry and their ladies clapping away like mad when the sahibs arrive. Wherever on earth did such things happen? Had someone made a speech we did not hear? Lean, who departs from the novel in so many ways, has reproduced faithfully a major howler: his police officer, like Forster's, arrogates to himself the role of public prosecutor violating every principle of British justice. Even more painful is the scene where a maniac Mahmood Ali chants Mrs Moore's name at the assembled mob outside the court building. The crowning agony is Aziz's Tarzanesque yell, screaming out the magic name towards the distant peaks. It is difficult to see what cinematic purpose is achieved by that very unpleasant noise.

The Indian characters in Forster's novel are not entirely convincing and are somewhat stereotyped, as are his British bureaucrats. The unreality is a fair reflection of the author's bafflement with India, evident in *The Hill of Devi*. Acceptable in the novel on these terms, it strains one's credulity in a film unsheltered by Forster's subtle prose. Except for one brief moment, Aziz is presented throughout as a pathetic overexcited babu forever anxious to please the sahibs – hardly the person Mrs Moore would seek to befriend. Anyone who has seen Victor Banerjee in Ray's *Home and the World* would recognize that this persistent lack of dignity was not the actor's natural style. Godbole is presented as a clown from some Bombay movie. Alec Guinness's acting is entirely convincing, but this comic character does little to enhance the film. Das, presiding over the court, seems to be holding back his tears with great difficulty. By the 1920s, the Raj was indeed a predicament for self-respecting Indians, but perhaps at a somewhat less obvious level.

Is Lean's India significantly different from Forster's? His Anglo-Indians – the ultimate memsahib Mrs Turton included – appear more real than in the novel, as much the creatures of historical circumstance as are the hapless Indians they ruled over. It was an unhappy land that Forster wrote of. The unhappiness is the sombre background to his tale of personal tragedies. It all happens in a small country town overlooked by bleak hills and in the dry capital of an Indian prince. Drabness is the dominant note, relieved by rare moments of beauty – in nature and human conduct. Lean has chosen to add a touch of glamour to misery – with the aid of snow peaks, *chenar*-lined avenues and a ruined temple. A forced happy ending is the logical climax of his vision of India. It does not convince. In the end, inevitably, one prefers the novel.

An elementary weakness

Peter Kemp

TREVOR GRIFFITHS
The Last Place on Earth
ITV

"Poles Apart" – the first episode of Trevor Griffiths's seven-part dramatization of Scott's and Amundsen's race across the Antarctic – opens in two contrastingly glacial environments. Clad in furs and crouched inside an igloo, Amundsen is seen humbly learning polar survival skills from Eskimos. Scott meanwhile, uniformed and vainglorious, is busily adapting himself to the numbing routines of the frosty Edwardian Establishment. Amundsen, with a distinguished record of exploration already behind him, respects the natural world; Scott – whose career, it's suggested, consists of covered-up bungling – grovels to the artificial.

The countries the two men represent likewise emerge as opposites. Norway – decent and democratic – is largely populated, it appears, by genial blue-eyed giants, temperately toasting each other in aquavit and conversing with energetic affability about "Wikings" and "woyages". Conversely, Edwardian England is a creaky museum of Imperial swank, echoing with hubris ("Every uninhabited part of the globe belongs by right to England"), and peopled by dinner-suited dodos.

As rapidly becomes clear, it's not so much the Pole as polarities that engage Griffiths's attention. Antithesis, as so often in his plays, dominates. Mechanically, his leaden screenplay oscillates between opposing extremes. Scott leaves for the Pole, on an unsafe ship, amid swagger, blaring bands and acres of bunting. Amundsen's finely equipped vessel slips modestly away down the silent beauty of an empty fiord. At Scott's back, haranguing him towards Polar extremity, is his wife Kathleen – presented as a kind of bohemian Boudicca given to outbursts like "You have a greatness in you, and I want some of it in me". Waving Amundsen off is his faithful old nursemaid, Betty, who, far from emitting clarion clamours in the wake of the departing sailors as Kathleen does, quietly distributes thick woollen socks she's knitted and murmurs, "Just come back. That's all I ask."

It is when the explorers reach the Antarctic, though, that differences between them stand out most starkly. As his undernourished men haul their overloaded sledges south, Scott makes every error in the book – or, at any rate, many of the errors catalogued in Roland Huntford's book, *Scott and Amundsen*, on which Griffiths's script rather slavishly depends. But where Huntford's book – while partisan – offers a rich store of fascinating information about polar travel, Griffiths reduces things to a simplistic diagram. For all its interminable expanses of dialogueless ploddings and flounderings and slitherings across sheets of snow, the television version captures none of the sense – present even in the prosaic writings of Amundsen – of the menace of the Antarctic or the sudden breath-taking emergence from its howling blizzards of dazzlingly lucid landscapes.

The overriding atmosphere isn't of the elemental but the elementary. Scott and Amundsen aren't so much pitted against challenging terrain as pitted against each other in one of Griffiths's unchallenging dichotomies. Amundsen, a paragon of mild strength set against Scott's monstrously petulant weakness, runs a camp that is a miracle of amiable coexistence. In contrast, the British base is riven with segregation – packing-cases fencing off men from officers – and torn with dissent: while Scott blithely drivels into his journal about his party being "knit together with a bond of friendship", Oates is grumpily writing home, "I dislike Scott intensely", and another disgruntled officer, Meares, fulminates against "leadership as crass, as arrogant, as irresponsible as Captain Scott's".

Straying away from his source in the direction of sentimentality about Amundsen, Griffiths concocts a figure who is decidedly more charismatic than the reedy-voiced martyr to haemorrhoids Huntford depicts. But when it comes to Scott – given a rendering by Martin Shaw that's about as warm and flexible as frost-bite – the portrait isn't merely warts and all, but virtually all warts. Animus snarls from every line. What seems peculiarly unfair about this is that, in many ways, Scott's mentality strikingly resembles Griffiths's own: both are dourly doctrinaire; locked into an ideological way of viewing things, they have virtually no awareness of individual complexity, and see life in terms of crude oppositions. The product of a way of thinking it belabours, *The Last Place on Earth* is a curious piece of work: an epic of exploration in which the author unadventurously trudges over his usual ground.

AUTHOR, AUTHOR

Competition No 320

Readers are invited to identify the sources of the three quotations which follow and to send us the answers so that they reach this office not later than April 26. A prize of £20 is offered for the first correct set of answers opened on that date, or failing that the most nearly correct – in which case inspired guesswork will also be taken into consideration. Entries, marked "Author, Author" on the envelope, should be addressed to the Editor, *The Times Literary Supplement*, Priory House, St John's Lane, London EC1M 4BX. The solution and results will appear on May 3.

1 As they gazed at each other each felt: Here am I – and then each felt: But how different! Hers was the pale worn face of an invalid, cut off from air, light, freedom. His was the warm ruddy face of a young animal; instinct with health and energy. Broken asunder, yet made in the same mould, could it be that each completed what was dormant in the other?

2 Personally speaking, sipping is something at which I rather excel; but silence of whatever kind makes me uncomfortable. I hold the cup several inches away from my face and propel my lips towards the rim in a winsome tapering pout. Simultaneously I roll my eyes into my skull. There was a time – I remember the first occasion particularly – when the whole performance brought a smile to the less flexible lips of S——

3 my body in its excellent black coat never lets me down
returning to you (as I always will, you know that)
and now
filling myself out with myself, no longer confused,
my panting pushing apart my black lips, I am unmovable
I stand with you braced against the wind.

Competition No 216
Winner: G. D. Mackenzie
Answers:

1 Love is a thyng as any spirit free.

Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Franklyn's Tale*

2 Love is feathered like a bird
To keep him warm,
To keep him safe from harm,
And by what winds or drafts his nest is stirred
They chill not Love.

Elizabeth Bishop, *Three Valentines*

3 Butt true Loue is a durable fyre
In the mynde euer burnynge;
Neuer sycke, neuer ould, neuer dead,
From itt selfe neuer turnynge.

Sir Walter Raleigh, *As you came from the holy land.*

Farandole, farce and vortex

David Budgen

FYODOR DOSTOEVSKY
The Possessed
Almeida Theatre

Taking his cue from Brecht and Meyerhold – not to mention Chaplin, Fred Astaire and the American musical – Yuri Lyubimov dispenses with the theatre of illusion and psychology and gives us instead an "experimental" extravaganza, made up of elements drawn from the circus, the music-hall and Grand Guignol. The action of the drama is confined to a black box outside time and space, presided over on high by the hanged dummies of the major characters, which in the end plummet down to provide a curtain. Apart from a splendidly surrealistic smoking piano – the kind of practical joke one might expect in hell – there are no props in sight. We are clearly trapped for the next three hours in Dostoevsky's – and Lyubimov's – subconcious, and there is no way out.

Stefan Lazaridis's ingenious walls made of strips of black rubber encircle the stage, entangling the actors, letting them slip in and out of the shadows, and doubling as trapezes, bellropes, improvised crucifixes: so many metaphors of intellectual and spiritual anguish. In scene after scene from the novel, at a breathless and exhausting pace, Dostoevsky's Gadarene swine – sometimes masked, sometimes gagged with sticking-plaster – swarm and cavort across the space, brandishing, or wearing round their necks, in grotesque parody of the idea of "adaptation", giant placards which proclaim either their identity or the title of a chapter in the novel. Demented and possessed, they have ceased to be "characters" and are reduced to Gogolian dimensions – a social mask, a way of walking or talking. The text of the novel has become a score, and what appears to be an insane and Dionysiac revel, on closer scrutiny turns out to be a minutely rehearsed choreography performed by a well-trained *troupe*.

There should be no doubt by now that the Almeida production is less about Dostoevsky than Lyubimov. The direct heir of Meyerhold, Lyubimov is one of the leading exponents of expressionism in the theatre, and his *Possessed* represents the culmination of a twenty-year search (including productions of two other Russian masters of the grotesque, Gogol and Bulgakov) for an original and distinctive style as far removed as possible from that approved by Soviet officialdom. Like his colleague and friend Giorgio Strehler at the Piccolo Teatro in Milan, Lyubimov is very much an *auteur*, and if you don't like *auteurs* in the theatre, you would do well to stay at home and work through your Penguin Classic. And yet, as adaptations go, this one is remarkably complete. I cannot think of a single major character, episode or even disquisition in the novel which has been omitted, or which is not alluded to in some form or other – even Stavrogin's notorious confession to Tikhon, originally cut by the censors, is included, albeit wittily transposed into a hand-out distributed during the interval (Lyubimov hates intervals). Indeed, it is this very principle of completeness on which Lyubimov insists, "even if it means increasing the pressure to breaking-point", that will make the work largely incomprehensible to those who are not intimately acquainted with the novel. Despite the fact that, like everything else Dostoevsky wrote, it is essentially dramatic (four major *skandaly* ending in a carnival-cum-holocaust) *The Possessed* is one of his longest and most complex works, and certainly the most diffuse and loosely structured. Lyubimov not only includes more, but his expressionist method captures more of the atmosphere and the flavour of the novel – "a wild farandole, tragic farce and vortex", as he calls it – than either Camus or Wajda, who were both obsessed with the political dimension of the novel.

The actors (drawn from various companies, including Shared Experience) are all well cast and, most importantly for Dostoevsky, look the part – particularly Nigel Terry as the enigmatic and lifeless Stavrogin tragically split between his yearning for faith and his disbelief, his power and his impotence. Stavrogin's *alter ego*, Pyotr

"Polichinelle" by Pablo Picasso, pen and ink, 1916. The drawing was offered for sale at Sotheby's on March 27 but remained unsold.

Verkhovensky, played dangerously close to Lenin by Michael Feast, is indeed half-mad, as Stavrogin calls him, and although not nearly as sinister as in the book, is riotously clownish and villainous. Both Liza and Dasha very plausibly suggest that typically Dostoevskian combination of salvation and ruin, while Harriet Walter as the lame half-wit and holy fool Marya Lebyadkina comes very near the required embodiment of Mother Earth and is particularly good in her anathematization of her "saviour-prince" when she realizes near the end that he is nothing but a pretender. It is to Lyubimov's credit that he has retained the narrator so essential to the novel, even though his frenzied speed means that he inevitably loses much of his gossipy charm. Much the same could also be said of those wonderful figures of parody and caricature in which Dostoevsky takes such evil delight – Varvara Stavrogina and Stepan Verkhovensky. This is particularly evident in the famous scene of Stepan's death "at the crossroads", by which Dostoevsky set such store: grotesque yet profound in the novel, it is merely perfunctory on stage.

The Possessed has already enjoyed a triumphant run at the Théâtre de L'Europe in Paris and at the Piccolo Teatro in Milan; whatever its fortune in London, it will be remembered as an event. It would be a mistake, however, to see it merely as another adaptation. Not only is it the culmination of Lyubimov's theatrical ideas, but it also marks the end of an era in Russia. As Lyubimov himself relates in his theatrical memoirs, *Le Feu sacré: souvenirs d'une vie de théâtre* (Paris, Fayard) – which reads for the most part like a macabre illustration of Shigalyov's ideology in action – when Andropov died last year, Lyubimov was summarily dismissed from the post he had held for the past twenty years as director of the Taganka theatre in Moscow; expelled from the Communist Party of which he had been a member for thirty years, since Stalin's death, and subsequently deprived of his citizenship; his theatre was systematically gagged by the State and finally silenced. The Taganka was his individual creation and for many years the only really creative theatre in Russia; furthermore, thanks to its risky repertoire and allusive style, it gradually became the political and moral conscience of the country. The dramatization of Dostoevsky's prophetic vision of the evils of totalitarianism at the Almeida provides a peculiarly fitting epitaph to the twenty glorious years of the Taganka and all that it meant for the cultural life of Russia.

The 1985 London Book Fair – which is open to publishers, booksellers, librarians, academics, authors and other trade visitors – will take place from Wednesday, April 10, to Friday, April 12, in the Barbican Exhibition Halls A and B, Golden Lane, London EC2.

Oracular urges

J. A. Turner

Signs of The Times: The first 200 years of the newspaper
Crawford Room, British Library, until June 30

A paper that so recently had reason to doubt whether it had a future at all can be forgiven for dwelling upon two centuries of its past. But this exhibition, organized jointly by Times Newspapers and the British Library, is not entirely an inside job, and the greatest treat for us is to see how a choice has been made from the alternative pasts of *The Times*. A caption croons about the "aura of prestige and authority" surrounding "the world's most famous newspaper", but the cumulative effect of the material exhibited is to emphasize flashiness and a penchant for own goals.

The effect might not be deliberate. The story begins with a few pieces of type and some commercial correspondence from John Walter in the late eighteenth century, but moves swiftly to Peterloo, which turned *The Times* into a reform newspaper, and the Queen Caroline affair, which trebled its circulation. Then, either as an act of folly or as a fine artistic gesture, the exhibition designer has skipped Delane and the Crimean War and we are taken to the Parnell libel, in which the paper unwittingly published fabrications about Parnell's support for Irish terrorism in 1887, in the hope of giving the government's Irish Crimes Bill a helping hand. The General Strike is a convenient stepping-stone to the edition of September 7, 1938, with Geoffrey Dawson's very own blue-pencil marks on the leader, changing its emphasis so much that many observers thought the British government was trying to signal approval for Hitler's plans. As if this were not enough to remind us that every oracle stammers sometimes, a dispatch from Kim Philby, lurking among the documents in celebration of famous correspondents, conjures up fresh memories. As though to confirm the paper's amiable eccentricity, the exhibition ends with a table of "first cuckoo letters.

The exhibition illustrates the history of the paper but, understandably, does not try to recount it. Some sense of continuity is maintained by a double frieze of editors and owners high up on the wall. In the body of the exhibition there is an emphasis on editors and reporters, but little on owners. This is a pity: if the founder, a libellous bankrupt, is worth a description, so is Northcliffe, a megalomaniac who died insane. Moreover, the paper has often been accused of taking its political colour from its owners' other properties, as the "twopenny Daily Mail" of the First World War or, more recently, the "paper that supports our boys". That aside, there are hints enough of the paper's multiple personae to make one hungry for more. We are given a little on Times New Roman, a little on photojournalism, a little on the inspired reporting of Henri de Blowitz at the Berlin Congress, a little on new technology, some letters from the archives, and a little self-satisfaction but not too much.

The one clear message of this exhibition is that *The Times*, like the Church of England which it is supposed by many to resemble, only makes sense in economic terms. Reform politics sold a lot of papers. So did Delane's attacks on the government in the 1840s and 1850s. For half a century thereafter it paid well to be a superb news-gathering agency and to cultivate oracular status. But no newspaper could simultaneously be oracular, independent and the authoritative voice of Britain. Delane's thunder was muted to a sycophantic burble, and the paper's self-created role as village newspaper for the Establishment took over its personality almost entirely. If nothing else, *Signs of the Times* will prod visitors into reflection about its other selves, which might have existed and perhaps still do.

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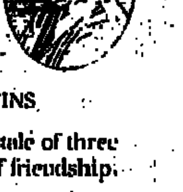

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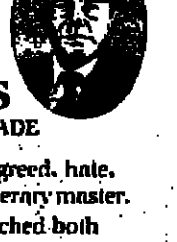

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A laird's legacy

T. C. Smout

J. L. CAMPBELL
Canna: The story of a Hebridean island
323pp. Oxford University Press. £25.
0 19 920137 4

It is half a century now since John Lorne Campbell wrote the *Book of Barra* and *Highland Songs of the Forty-five*: in the interim he has won fame and honour as a collector and compiler, with Francis Collinson, of the three volumes of *Hebridean Folksongs*, of which the last was published in 1982. One of his noted services was to rescue from obscurity the Scottish studies of the late seventeenth-century Welsh polymath and keeper of the Ashmolean Museum, Edward Lhuyd, whose travels he helped to edit in 1963. Now he turns his attention to writing about the island of Canna, on which he lived as its owner from 1938 to 1981, and which he then presented in gift to the National Trust for Scotland.

The author makes no bones about compiling an idiosyncratic book. He writes, says the blurb, "from the point of view of the historical Gaelic-speaking Jacobite Hebridean, too often considered a non-person by Scottish historians." Two thirds of the book's 300 pages are taken up by historical description, and the remainder are appendixes relating to documents, place-names, traditions and the natural history of Canna. One of Dr Campbell's less publicized distinctions is as an amateur naturalist, who, by recording the butterflies and moths of his island over an exceptionally long period, has made a substantial contribution to the knowledge of Scottish lepidoptera. The birds he left to a collaborator, R. L. Swann, who unfortunately has omitted Canna's most conspicuous breeding species, the puffin.

It is, plainly, not easy to write the history of Canna: its small size (six miles by two) and remoteness from the main lines of modern communication have left it without some of the materials on which a larger community might rely. It did not, for example, send witnesses either to the Scottish Poor Law Commission of 1842, or to the Napier Commission on crofting conditions in 1883. It is unfortunate, however, that Campbell has overlooked the Rev John Walker's description of the island in 1764, which would have added a good foundation to his subsequent discussion of economy and population. Walker had the local catechist enumerate 253 inhabitants, and, very exceptionally, investigated the ages of each one of them: there were sixty-five under ten and 125 under twenty, but only twenty-nine over fifty and only two over sixty-two. He also described the island as having ten acres for each inhabitant, ten ploughs for the whole, and no industry of any kind, but it had sent fourteen men to fight in its chief's regiment in the American wars. By 1821 (despite clearances for sheep around 1793 not referred to by Campbell) the population had grown to 436. The inhabitants of the Small Isles then lived entirely on potatoes, consuming, according to the minister in the *New Statistical Account*, about five or six pounds per head per day. In 1846 the crop failed throughout the Highlands in the great blight, a fact rather barely mentioned here, though it was the pivot on which the economic and social history of the Gaelic-speaking Hebrides eventually turned. By 1861 the population was down to 127, by 1911 to seventy and by 1981 to eighteen. Such is the story of small island communities throughout twentieth-century Europe, carried to sad extremes in the Hebrides.

One of John Cooper's atmospheric photographs, illustrations to Barra, *text by Helen McGregor (unnumbered pages. Canongate. £9.95. 08624E 059 2).*

Perhaps the main strengths of Campbell's account lie in the early chapters, where he discusses the relationship of the Hebrides to Irish and Norse society, and laments the fact that the islands were never strong enough to extract the same concessions of limited self-government from the mainland power that the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands obtained from London. The result has been, he suggests, a degree of ham-fistedness in understanding the essential needs and details of insular life that continues to the present day. Canna is among those Hebridean islands that remained loyal to the Catholic church after the Reformation – or perhaps one should more accurately say, were first claimed for modern Christianity by the Franciscan mission of the 1620s before the Presbyterians had time to organize themselves to teach their version first. There is a good and sympathetic chapter on the work of the friars, and another on the exertions of those improving enthusiasts, the British Fisheries Society, whose officers visited Canna in the following century.

Does it make a significant difference that the author writes from the perspective of a "Gaelic-speaking Jacobite Hebridean"? It does not appear to, as most Scottish historians in the last decade have come much closer to understanding that view than was the case fifty years ago. No one could accuse the leading contemporary historians of the early modern Highlands – David Stevenson, Bruce Lenman, Allan Macinnes – of disregarding the native Gaels, or peddling a line sympathetic to Edinburgh's cultural imperialism. Still less could it be said of the historians of the Clearances, James Hunter and Eric Richards. In that sense, perhaps, we have learned something from Dr Campbell's lifework of bringing the cultural heritage of the Hebrides to the notice of the world outside: he finds himself preaching to the converted.

A Wild Flight of Gordons: Odd and [illegible] *members of the Gordon family* by Andrew Gordon, 5th Marquess of Aberdeen, (2[illegible] Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £10.95. 0 297 [illegible] 3) contains a series of portraits of his Gordon kinsmen, among them Lord George Gordon of the 1780 Gordon riots. Also included is an account of the mysterious disappearance and death in America of his great-uncle, the [illegible] Earl of Aberdeen.

Bawbees before bobbies

Bruce Lenman

JOHN ROBERTSON
The Scottish Enlightenment and the Militia Issue
272pp. Edinburgh: John Donald. £18.10.
0 85976 109 6

The Scottish Enlightenment is nothing if not a well-ploughed tilth. The outstanding gap in the literature is the lack of a really good intellectual history of the phenomenon as a whole, and that is probably itself a tribute to the intimidating depth of monographic studies built up by several generations of Anglo-American scholarship. But John Robertson is to be congratulated on finding a topic which is both fresh and important.

His point of departure is the English Standing Army Controversy of 1697–98, when the Tories in the English Parliament forced William of Orange to reduce the size of the army substantially, while the radical Whigs or "Commonwealthmen" launched an attack on the very idea of a permanent monopoly of force by the executive in the shape of a standing army. At this point the outstanding Scottish "Real Whig", Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun, weighed in with a series of publications which argued that a militia in which all free men participated was the proper counterpart to a balanced free constitution, and that a mercenary professional army was the harbinger of despotism and slavery. Obviously, the political argument was bound to be further complicated by disputes about the ability or inability of an amateur militia to cope with the specialized demands of modern war. From there the whole question of the militia went on to become a central one in that protracted debate on the moral and political structure of human society which was the core of Enlightenment discourse in North Britain.

Adam Ferguson, the Edinburgh professor who has some claim to be regarded as the father of modern sociology, was heavily involved not only in the academic debate on the role of a militia in a free society, but also in a series of vocal agitations for the establishment of a Scottish militia to match the English militia. He was joined in the agitation by other prominent "Moderate Literati" such as the clergyman Dr Alexander Carlyle, and they eventually created the Poker Club for the specific purpose of stirring up enthusiasm for their chosen cause. The more sceptical intellects of David Hume and Adam Smith were not exactly openly opposed to the patriotic demands of their pro-militia friends, but rather inclined to insinuate reservations which could be used by others to undermine the entire movement. Rather than waste time resenting the fact that English politicians clearly did not trust the Scots enough to let them have a militia, this school of thought believed that the Scots should concentrate on making money, while accepting that in accordance with the principle of the division of labour, war was the business of the professional soldier. This was certainly a very Humean position, in that after a great display of open-mindedness it concluded that what Westminster wanted was best.

Dr Robertson's book will be the standard work on its theme for a long time. It has its limitations. He accepts the quite misguided assumption of the Court Whig world that the Enlightenment in Scotland was essentially a phenomenon of the post-Union era. In fact it is now clear that intellectual and cultural developments are continuous from 1660, and nowhere more so than in matters relating to the militia, which the Restoration régime deliberately substituted for a standing army as its main means of defence, after a debate which this book quite wrongly ignores. Nor can one be entirely comfortable with a work which analyses ultimately unsuccessful arguments minutely while failing to point out that, despite the Adam Smith view that professionalism was the key to military efficiency, the British Army in the eighteenth century usually did dismally badly against both foreign foes and internal rebels, because it was a police force rather than an army. However, to carp as a final note would be unfair: this is a good piece of work.

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University of Pennsylvania Press
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High priest of heathendom

Charles Thomas

NIKOLAI TOLSTOY
The Quest for Merlin
322pp. Hamish Hamilton. £12.95.
0241 11356 3

Over the past ten years British protohistoric studies have reached an interesting stage. Admittedly we have had no new discoveries of important manuscripts – nor are there likely to be now – and progress in archaeology and Insular linguistics has been of limited direct help. Instead, a leap forward has taken place in the area of interpretation; there have also been fresh critical versions of texts, some exquisitely detailed analyses drawing upon Late Classical scholarship and palaeography, some constructive iconoclasm and (at last) deployment of a good deal of robust common sense. But this New Look has sharpened an old divide, between the conventional and unconventional in Insular scholarship. Nikolai Tolstoy most certainly belongs to the unconventional camp. *The Quest for Merlin* – and he makes this abundantly clear – is another foray into the Matter of Britain.

That field is easier to recognize than to define concisely and it is also a field where serious writing, like *Merlin*, can unfairly be contaminated by the presence of so much Matter-of-Britain lunacy (fringe Arthuriana, Glastonbury whimsies, ley-lines, etc). These writings are based on the belief, strongly upheld, if rarely voiced explicitly, that from roughly just pre-Roman times to roughly the Norman Conquest, Britain was uniquely special. It was a God-given haven for deep mysteries (Celtic, not Anglo-Saxon) which we lost, either through national shortcomings or by the intervention of dark powers. Fictional treatment came late – and not with Tennyson, whose Sir Lancelots are merely pre-Raphaelite Old Etonians, innocent of booze, sex and the gaming tables. It started with the interlocking school of Charles Williams, C. S. Lewis and Tolkien, and I suppose one could add Arthur Machen, T. H. White and Rutland Boughton. The Tolkien Middle Earth, like its imitations, is Old Britain; an ocean to the west, sandy deserts (North Africa) southward, Finno-Ugrian orcs to the north-east. Serious treatment partly involved Robert Graves, in his White Goddess period, and Geoffrey Ashe's earlier books. Tolstoy writes in that particular aspect of the Robert Graves tradition.

His thesis is complicated and an initial abstract or summary would have been useful. "Merlin" stands for a real person, a late sixth-century North Briton whose career gave rise to the biography of a remarkable individual *and* the enactment of a myth". In secular terms he was potently involved in the post-Roman, pre or non-Anglo-Saxon native kingships of what is today England, Wales and southern Scotland. In his other guise, he was the focus of a remnant priesthood, one that extended back in time through what we know as Druidism to the mists of prehistory. This priesthood was shamanistic in part if not exclusively. Merlin himself may have been viewed as both son and incarnation of a pre-Roman Celtic deity Lug, and in a secondary incarnation the Celtic Lord-of-the-Beasts horned god Cernunnos. At one period Merlin withdrew for trance and inspiration to an identifiable forest, and he can otherwise be linked to identifiable locations. These conclusions emerge from scrutiny of later legends, mainly in verse, that portray the man, his life and his attributes.

How can we – how can Tolstoy, or anybody else – know this? It is true that, because of peripheral isolation, surviving literature from Norman Ireland, as also from Wales (meaning here Wales, Cumbria and southern Scotland), constitutes a vast treasury. Much of it is curious and archaic, some of it obviously non-Christian, and all of it is difficult to unravel in terms of the modern world. Approaching it as potential history, one finds no clear ground-rules, and can well be forced into the same process of inspired inferences which (for instance) led Graves to conclude that the Holy Unspeakable Name of God had once been "Jievoao". Again, as history, there is a stumbling-block, the fact that our national historical record is discontinuous. As Edward Thompson recently warned us, the most frightening conclusion to be extracted from Gildas's sixth-century AD writing is one of "the destruction of knowledge itself. . . . Knowledge of the past had been wiped out of men's minds." The eraser, in this case, was the Anglo-Saxon invasion; the Danish, Norse and Norman episodes were yet to come. And, given these breaks, those who try to penetrate the history of so-called Dark Age Britain by less than normal channels of inquiry always end up, as Tolstoy has done, with Geoffrey of Monmouth.

There is nothing inherently objectionable about Geoffrey's History (or his later Life of Merlin), if you want a good old rip-roaring medieval read. But a great many people will cavil at the use of his interpretations to illuminate the immediately post-Roman centuries. It is as if, bereft of all State Papers, we were dependent for our knowledge of the Plantagenet dynasty on public-house raconteurs in modern Nottingham. Are there, truly, reflections of ancient events in Geoffrey, muddled up with his conception of Jungian-type Celtic myths? Did he really consult "lost books"? Tolstoy does not completely forestall criticism in his Galfridian handling.

And yet . . . late as this material is, one begins to share Tolstoy's faith that far behind it all stands a historical Merlin personage. There seems to be just that little too much for easy dismissal. *The Quest for Merlin* is presented as the outcome of personal enthusiasm. The text, with its plethora of ideas and names and analogies, requires close attention. In specific respects the author is patently right. He sees the disproportionate historic importance of early North Britain (meaning pre-Anglian Northumbria and Cumbria, with the pre-Gaelic Scottish lowlands) in the affairs of the native British kingdoms and in the transmission of native legend and literature. Schoolbook history invariably misses this. He picks out, as did H.M.and Nora Chadwick and Kenneth Jackson, such key figures as Kentigern of Glasgow, founder of a diocese slightly older than Canterbury and London. And, in examining the nature of Merlin's strange priesthood, I think he advances the understanding of British pre-Christian religion. "Druids", whatever they may have been, were not kindly old men in white, busy with alphabetic riddles. The first Christians knew better than that. There is, and it has to be faced, a tendency to sadistic brutality quite near the surface of corporate Celtdom. Irish patriots of either sort who assault each other with power-tools in the name of Holy Ireland (or King Billy) need no tuition from Libya or anywhere else in this game, and never have done. The dark and nasty places of Celtic heathendom (see plates 19 and 27b) were for dark and nasty doings. Tolstoy is interested in shamanism, which he defines with proper reservations, and some of his explanations are both unusual and cogent.

There is a large section of twenty-seven relevant plates. A few line-maps would have assisted those not familiar with North Britain in detail. We are given a list of primary sources (the author preferring, in some cases, slightly outmoded editions) and a formidable fifty-page batch of chapter notes. Packed with the most recondite references, it still omits some expected ones, like M.A. Czaplicka's *Aboriginal Siberia* (1914) and Henry Michael's 1963 Toronto translation of the Russian *Studies in Siberian Shamanism*, that do in fact support Tolstoy's notions. The index is a little thin. Forget the niggles; this is an odd, but interesting and worthwhile book and some of its findings ought to stand.

Documents of Medieval History 5 is *The Norman Conquest* by R. Allen Brown (181pp. Edward Arnold. Paperback, £12.50. 0 7131 6406 9). The selection represents literary and narrative sources, documentary ones, letters and the art of the period, relating to both Anglo-Saxon and Norman England and pre-Conquest Normandy.

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The empire exposed

Zara Steiner

KEITH M. WILSON
The Policy of the Entente: Essays on the determinants of British foreign policy 1904–1914
199pp. Cambridge University Press. £19.50.
0521 30195 5

This is an important but disappointing book. Keith Wilson is offering a radically different reading of British foreign policy before the First World War. In his view, the main British concern was with the Russian threat to Britain's imperial frontiers, above all India, and with the creation and nurturing of the Russian entente. The agreements with France were of secondary importance; the origin of that entente lay in the bridge to Russia, and subsequent support stemmed from continuing fears of a Russian advance into Central Asia. The view that Britain enjoyed a "free hand" and was acting to preserve the balance of power in Europe was a myth consciously designed to disguise Britain's decline and inability to sustain the world role in once enjoyed. By purposely misreading and misrepresenting the German position, *Sir* Edward Grey sought to divert attention from British weakness and the poverty of his entente policies. Britain was unable to protect its empire or to effect the balance of power in Europe; its dependence on Russia and France meant that it would inevitably be involved in their Continental wars whenever they occurred. Yet because of the domestic political environment in which they operated, Grey and his advisers were forced to conceal their true intentions and came to deceive their colleagues and themselves.

These essays add up to a powerful indictment of British foreign policy and a damning portrait of Grey. Some of Dr Wilson's points have been made by others; none has driven the case against Grey so hard and far. A growing number of historians have stressed the Russian threat and the imperial factor in British policy and have argued that its actions were far more selfish and self-regarding than its professed concern for the maintenance of the balance of power in Europe. Few have argued that the British "invented" the German menace. Even so-called orthodox historians have exposed the gap between British commitments and resources and explored its consequences. It has already been argued that the "free hand" was an illusion and that Grey's diplomacy left him far less free than he professed, but it has rarely been suggested that there was no room at all for manoeuvre or that Grey deliberately disguised his servitude. Grey's critics, both at the time and now, have accused him of lying; even his defenders have charged that he was less than honest with his colleagues and backbenchers. But few writers since 1945 have presented him as a Machiavellian figure pretending to follow a policy he knew could not succeed and never intended to implement.

Unfortunately, despite the originality of his contribution, Wilson does not present his case in a sustained narrative. His basic assumptions are never fully explored. This book consists of a series of essays, some previously published, each of which addresses a separate point or issue. A central theme emerges and the individual conclusions reinforce each other but the essays are not an adequate substitute for a developed argument. Too much is omitted and too little attention is paid to variations over time and between individuals. Given his approach, Wilson can ignore changing views about the Russian danger and can minimize differences within the Foreign Office over the respective threats of Russia and Germany. Perceptions of power, both of one's own nation and that of others, are highly variable, but Wilson treats them as constants, making no allowance for change, inherited assumptions, past experiences, new configurations and, following his own argument, shifts in internal politics. Fully admitting that the origins of the ententes lay in Britain's exposed imperial position, one can still argue that the British view of Germany, however influenced by its own fears, was based on something more concrete than Britain's weakness. Only the most extreme critics of Fritz Fischer have denied that there were grounds for concern about German hegemonic ambitions whatever their source and regardless of the British reading and response. To argue that Grey and his officials deliberately credited Germany with intentions that they did not really believe it possessed goes beyond the evidence presented in this short book.

Each essay rests on an impressive array of new sources, mainly political, diplomatic and military. Wilson seems to have avoided secondary works pertinent to his theme. In the key essays on the balance of power, the free hand, and the question of Germany, he tends to omit, disregard or dismiss evidence that might lead more dispassionate readers to more qualified conclusions. There is no room in his account for half-tones or provisional verdicts, inconsistencies, confusions, or contradictory actions, though we know that most statesmen hold and act on conflicting assumptions and rarely follow their own arguments to logical conclusions. Wilson's rigidity and a tendency to over-simplify weaken his case and raise questions not about his evidence but about his interpretation off it.

The most valuable parts of this bo[illegible] with the politics of Liberal foreign pol[illegible] different essays, Wilson convincingly [illegible] trates how political pressures – above all [illegible] radical opposition and financial requirements [illegible] imposed severe limitations on the p[illegible] makers and encouraged them to mask [illegible] diplomatic intentions. His canvas could [illegible] been widened; work on Haldane's army and [illegible] the Admiralty suggests the degree to [illegible] finance rather than the German threat d[illegible] *pre-war planning*. These are studies of "[illegible] politics"; no effort has been made at a Fo[illegible] like analysis of the broader framework [illegible] which the Foreign Office functioned. The [illegible] concluding essays again point to the im[illegible] ance of *innenpolitik* in the decision for wa[illegible] the choice of military options. The view [illegible] Britain intervened for the sake of Belgium [illegible] long been discarded, but Wilson, unlike [illegible] writers, underlines the importance of [illegible] Conservative intervention in convincing [illegible] cabinet neutralists to support Grey, and [illegible] ses the central importance of the con[illegible] unity and the continuation of Liberal r[illegible] their conversion. He also makes the o[illegible] point that *the military were still consid*[illegible] Belgian landing in August 1914. The pla[illegible] the BEF on the left flank of the French, [illegible] decision to dispatch the army to France, [illegible] political rather than a military choice ba[illegible] the policy of the entente. Though not c[illegible] dered here, the retention of two divi[illegible] home in part to deal with expected do[illegible] difficulties arising from an anticipated c[illegible] of international trade and credit underl[illegible] importance of the domestic side of the [illegible] tion.

There is a good deal in this book to [illegible] and weigh. Despite its weaknesses and [illegible] the fact that I am sceptical about many [illegible] *I take to be its central themes*, I highly [illegible] mend it, particularly to those who thi[illegible] the debate about war origins has come [illegible] timely end.

Flaws in the fleet

Bryan Ranft

IVO NIKOLAI LAMBI
The Navy and German Power Politics 1862–1914
449pp. Allen and Unwin. £25.
0049430351

The rise of German naval power and its contribution to the outbreak of the First World War has already been well treated in English. The tone was set as far back as 1934 in E. L. Woodward's *Great Britain and the German Navy*. More recently, writers such as Jonathan Steinberg and Paul Kennedy, benefiting from the availability of the German naval archives, have clearly established the political and strategic motivation of Germany's naval ambitions. Similarly, the English translations (1967) of Fritz Fischer's *Griff nach der Weltmacht* made available his controversial thesis that the rise of the navy was an essential part of a drive to world domination, as well as a means of healing some of the divisive strains in the fabric of the Wilhelmine empire. Holger H. Herwig's work on the German naval officer corps has stressed how the caste divisions of the empire were reflected in the navy, with detriment to its efficiency and morale.

This scholarly work established clearly the significance of Tirpitz's manipulative skills in creating the political and financial support necessary to realize his aim of building a fleet strong enough to free Germany from what he saw as the unacceptable barriers to her global ambitions imposed by British sea power. It also shows that the failure of his plan lay in his inability to recognize the fact that no British government could accept the loss of a maritime supremacy which had always been seen as essential to national survival, and would not only out-build Germany but, if necessary, go to war in its defence.

Earlier writing had also pointed out the institutional weaknesses which led to control over German naval policy and operations being divided between the Imperial Naval Office, the Admiralty Staff and the Fleet Command. Each strove to make its voice prevail and each was open to pressure from the Kaiser's opinionated passion for naval affairs, exercised institutionally, through his Naval Cabinet, as well as personally. Thus the navy suffered particularly from the whims and inconsistencies which marked all his interventions in important affairs.

Ivo Lambi's work is in no major sense revisionist and leaves these interpretations unchallenged, but it is none the less important. Since 1969 he has immersed himself in the German archives, particularly, though not solely, in the Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv in Freiburg, and, concentrating on the mass of papers dealing with operational plans produced in the various naval organizations, has linked their development with concurrent changes in the national and international scene and in naval matériel, especially the battleship and the torpedo. He examines the navy's reactions to strategic problems. Should Germany follow the battle fleet doctrine of Mahan or that of the French Guerre de Course? He describes in minute detail the different plans demanded by uncertainty as to the navy's enemies. Would it be France or Russia separately, or in alliance, and, most difficult of all, what if Britain were to join them? Would the main area of operations be the North Sea or the Baltic? Should the navy's role be determined by the army's requirements or had it a distinctive contribution to make?

In matters of detail Professor Lambi has much of interest to say about how seriously Germany viewed the possibility of British attempts to seize a base on her North Sea coast, and how this led to more joint planning with the army than is usually mentioned. Lambi's work supports the view that amid all the feverish planning about how to deal with Britain's maritime superiority no detailed thought had been given to what was to prove the German navy's most effective weapon, unrestricted submarine attacks on merchant shipping.

The originality of the book lies in its detailed narrative of the development of naval planning, authenticated by an impressive array of references and quotations. It could have been made even more illuminating if Professor Lambi had permitted himself more analysis and comment. It would have been valuable to have had more of his verdicts on the quality of thought of the planners, and evaluations of how significant the nuances in drafting really were. How does he see the relationships between contingent planning and the political realities at the time the plans were drawn up? When he does enter into judgments and evaluations they are compelling. More of them would have substantially increased the impact of his admirable attention to detail.

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University of Wisconsin Press
1 Gower Street
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In the light of the evidence

Geoffrey Warnock

BRAND BLANSHARD
Four Reasonable Men
308pp. Middletown CT: Wesleyan University Press. $25.95.
0819551007

This extremely agreeable book is not a work of academic philosophy, nor, primarily at any rate, of biography either. It is a sustained, rather stately essay in praise of reasonableness, commending that virtue to the reader by setting before him four notable exemplars of its pertinacious exercise – Marcus Aurelius, John Stuart Mill, Ernest Renan and Henry Sidgwick.

Its distinguished American author (who was born in 1892) is himself an academic philosopher, and as such has long and consistently campaigned in defence of "rationalism". This has sometimes led to confusion. Rationalism, as a doctrine in academic philosophy, stands in contrast – though not in altogether *clear* contrast – with empiricism; the issue is whether certain sorts of important truths about the world can be established (if at all) only "by experience", or whether their truth can be discerned "by reason". In some of his philosophical works Brand Blanshard has seemed to suppose that only rationalists, in that sense, could be true friends of reason; as if one who, like Hume for example, set certain limits to what reason *could achieve must* be somehow committed to a general contempt for reasoning – to the strange position that it is perfectly all right to be irrational. That confusion is, happily, entirely absent from this book. In the essay on Mill, for example, though there are one or two rather perfunctory, even routine condemnations of his undoubted empiricism, there is no suggestion that his being an empiricist made it impossible, or even in the least surprising, that he should have been a reasonable man.

What, then, is it to be reasonable? Professor Blanshard makes no philosophical fuss about this; it is to have "a settled disposition to guide one's belief and conduct by the evidence", to "exercise critical, reflective judgement in issues both of belief and action". He assumes, of course, that this is at least possible – that, in matters of belief, there commonly *is* evidence that can be critically and correctly assessed, and that, in matters of conduct, there commonly *are* considerations that can be critically and correctly weighed. There are, no doubt, philosophical assumptions lurking here. Blanshard is not, indeed, taking for granted his own "rationalism", but he is certainly assuming some sort of general objectivism – that beliefs can, in the light of evidence, be rightly or wrongly held (which perhaps few will boggle at), and also, of course more arguably, that practical choices can often, in the light of reasons, be pronounced right or wrong. He is addressing, however, not philosophers, but reasonable men (including, no doubt, some philosophers), and it is not his purpose in this book to pursue philosophical controversies.

If that is what reasonableness is, why does it need to be praised? No doubt it is a virtue which, like other virtues, is often not practised. Not only are many of us not very good at assessing the weight of evidence or the force of reasons; very often, alas, we do not try very hard to do so, whether from laziness, or from attachment to what we simply *want* to believe or to do. But even if we all too often fail to be reasonable, is it seriously questionable whether reasonableness is a good thing? Why do we need – as Blanshard's enterprise seems to assume that we do need – to be persuaded that it is?

Neither this question nor its answer is explicit in Blanshard's text, but there are clues in his text to what the answer should probably be. The great enemy of reasonableness, in his view – and to this he devotes his final chapter – is not stupidity, but what he calls "prejudice". We are congenitally subject to biases in favour of ourselves; of our friends and relations; of our own nation or race; of our own sex; of our own sect or party; and so on. There are things which, both as issuing from and as tending to reinforce these biases, we strongly *want* to believe to be the case, ways in which we are strongly predisposed to feel and to behave; and when we strongly want to believe or to behave in a certain way, we are apt to be much disinclined, or even positively to refuse, to run the risk of being obliged to change our minds by evidence or argument. But if that is the general form of a reason – the main reason – why people are unreasonable, perhaps one can see why reasonableness is not always very warmly regarded; if "prejudice" – wanting something very much – is the great enemy of reasonableness, perhaps the impeccably, unfailingly reasonable man is the man who does not very strongly want anything at all. Behind the "reasonable man" there lurks the unattractive shadow of the "cold fish".

Blanshard's four examples look rather unlike one another in this respect. It is hard, indeed, to be sure about Marcus Aurelius. His reasonableness was admirable, certainly, if only because his position – as other Roman emperors luridly illustrated – was one in which wild unreason was both easy and seductive; but he does give – even after discounting the less attractive Stoic orthodoxies – a rather chilly impression. Mill is more sympathetic, partly because his devotion to truth and reason was itself so fervent, and partly because his most conspicuous lapse (as it surely was) into unreason took the amiable form of extravagant adulation of the talents and attainments of his own wife. The effect of this is, however, a little spoiled by his icy injustice towards other members of his family for their failure fully to share this particular enthusiasm.

But, of these four, it is surely Renan who will seem to most readers the most appealing figure. There was nothing in the least chilly about him. Intended for the priesthood and educated as a seminarian, he loved his faith, his church, his teachers with open, unaffected warmth and humility. When driven by evidence and argument to abandon all their doctrines, he loved them no less. The irony and sarcasm of Gibbon, the veiled mockery of Hume or the barbed ferocity of Voltaire were alien to his modest, kindly and affectionate disposition. If we need to be persuaded that a resolute, steady attachment to the pursuit of truth in opinion, and of reason in argument, does not necessarily stifle human feelings or imply the lack of them, contemplation of the case of Renan should indeed be persuasive.

Blanshard cites, as an instance of the high reasonableness of Sidgwick, that he once interrupted a holiday in Switzerland in order to discharge the civic duty of voting in a local election at Cambridge. It is far from clear, one may think, that the instance really proves the point.

Circumventing truth

Alan Sheridan

MARK COUSINS and ATHAR HUSSAIN
Michel Foucault
278pp. Macmillan. £15 (paperback, £6.95).
0333286502
MARK POSTER
Foucault, Marxism and History
184pp. Polity Press. £16.50 (paperback, £5.95).
0745600174

Mark Cousins and Athar Hussain end their *Michel Foucault* with what has become a ritual application to their subject of his own comment on Nietzsche: "The only valid tribute to thought such as Nietzsche's is precisely to use it, to deform it, to make it groan and protest . . .". It is an odd servility that requires Foucault's validation before criticizing Foucault, but in fact there is not a single sentence in this book that could have caused him more than a slight grimace, since nine-tenths of it is précis or disguised précis of his own writings. The tactic adopted is to rearrange material from Foucault's major books up to Volume One of the *History of Sexuality*, and to recycle it under such thematic or institutional heads as "The Human Sciences", "The Asylum", "The Prison", "Power", etc. Thus the impact of Foucault's words is muffled; his thought is subjected not to some audacious but productive torture (of the kind Foucault was practising on Nietzsche), but rather to suffocation.

Foucault's books are literary texts, "fictions" constructed by a master stylist that reject any "truth claims" made either on their own behalf or on that of the "human sciences". It is hardly surprising that Cousins and Hussain, teachers of sociology and economics respectively, should seek to reduce these wayward texts to a set of manageable propositions. But unless they are mounting a counter-attack from some truth-claiming positon, which, as far as I can tell, they are not, it seems perverse to undo Foucault's careful "truth"-evading strategies.

Only at the very end do the authors distance themselves from Foucault's views, but so tentatively and with so much circumspection as to reveal very little of their own position. Two passages, however, repay attention. The first points out the limitations of Foucault's use of war imagery in his analysis of political power. Though in tune, I believe, with his later thinking, this criticism was never theorized by him – largely because his reflections on the question of sexuality led him eventually outside the realm of political power altogether.

The second passage makes an interesting connection between historical relativism and political radicalism, in the (unjustified) belief that "what emerges historically can by that token be . . . the object of political transformation". A distinction is drawn between analysis and "critique", by which is meant analysis that adopts the vantage-point of the future, ie, one of transcendence in relation to the present. Cousins and Hussain credit Foucault with standing outside "critique", even though he often seemed to endorse those who used his work for purposes of "critique". True enough, yet it should be said that this endorsement always occurred in the context of interviews, and that nothing of the kind is to be found after 1980.

The problems with Mark Poster's book *Foucault, Marxism and History* begin with the blurb. "Foucault's thought is seen as both a continuation of, and yet a departure from, the Western Marxist tradition . . . . In particular, *Discipline and Punish* and *The History of Sexuality* exemplify a Nietzschean approach to history . . .". But whatever use Foucault may have made of Nietzsche, it is surely wrong to say of any of his books that it exemplifies "a Nietzschean approach". And by what perversity can Foucault's relationship with "the Western Marxist tradition" be seen as anything other than circumvention? One wonders how a writer of "Nietzschean books" can sit, however uncomfortably, in "the Western Marxist tradition". Poster is not one for fine distinctions, however:

> if by Marxism one means not the special theory of the mode of production or the critique of political economy, and not even the supposed dialectical method, but instead a critical view of domination which as historical materialism takes all social practices as transitory and all intellectual formations as indissociably connected with power and social relations – then . . .

Given which premise, it is hardly surprising to find Foucault greeted as "ultimately more Marxist than Althusser"!

But Poster's ambitions go well beyond relating Foucault to Marxism. He promises "a relentless, systematic critique of Marxism" (in the older, stricter sense) with a view to determining which of its elements might still serve in the construction of "critical theory", a term corresponding roughly to the newer, ecumenical version of Marxism defined above and embracing the original Frankfurt School, Habermas, Sartre and Foucault. Finally, we are promised the elaboration of a new notion, "the mode of information", destined to replace the Marxist "mode of production". And all this in a book of no more than 54,000 words. Clearly, something had to go: what went was any meaningful connection between one bright idea and the next.

Poster writes intelligently about Marx and Sartre. On Foucault, however, he is often misleading and occasionally downright wrong. Like some others who still feel a tug of loyalty to the "Western Marxist tradition", he tends to praise Foucault for what he does, and blame him for not doing what he resolutely set his face against doing:

> He urges us to rid ourselves of such "true discourses" on sexuality, but he does not provide a theoretical basis for distinguishing between discourses that lead to domination and those that pave the way for liberation. He never meditates on the power effect of his own discourse or provides criteria by which one can distinguish its conservative and radical mores.

More seriously, Poster attributes to Foucault himself Foucault's description of Lacan to the effect that "the law is what constitutes both desire and the lack on which it is predicated". "This important shift in the argument requires elaboration", Poster adds. But it would take more than elaboration to make Foucault subscribe to such a view.

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Arts of response

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RUKUN ADVANI
E. M. Forster as Critic
255pp. Croom Helm. £16.95.
0 7099 0545 9
DAVID DOWLING
Bloomsbury Aesthetics and the Novels of Forster and Woolf
249pp. Macmillan. £22.50.
0 333 35474 5

F. R. Leavis, recalling E. M. Forster's Clark Lectures on the Novel, pronounced them to be "intellectually null". Rukun Advani's study disarmingly challenges that verdict. Drawing on the whole range of Forster's critical essays, collected and uncollected, it demonstrates that, despite an apparently random output, Forster was seriously concerned with the techniques and objectives of the writer's art. His attitude to literature was that of a dedicated critic, not of a mere easy-going belletrist. The book, forcefully and clearly written, provides a systematic guide to Forster's thinking.

Having discussed his ideas on philosophy, on society, on religion (an especially valuable chapter) and on aesthetics, Dr Advani turns to the criticism, with particular reference to *Aspects of the Novel* and its use of musical terminology, stressing Forster's belief that the business of a work of literature is to direct the reader's attention away from itself towards a committed response to life (a point made also in David Dowling's *Bloomsbury Aesthetics and the Novels of Forster and Woolf*). A bibliography of Forster's uncollected essays and a wealth of quotations are evidence of the good use made of the archives at King's College, as is the discussion of such relatively unknown writings as the paper on Kipling delivered before the Weybridge Literary Society, probably in 1908.

Forster's use of music as a controlling medium in his fiction is likewise discussed by David Dowling, though in a more critical spirit. His comparative study of Forster and Virginia Woolf argues that painting is a dominant influence in both writers' work. Following an account of the theories and practice of Roger Fry, and an informative section on Charles Mauron (a thinker who neatly pin-points the worrying incompatibility between action and contemplation that besets the liberal writer), Dowling argues that Forster's novels show a consistent bias against art in favour of psychological encounter. But in this he oversimplifies. It is the confusion of art with artefacts which Forster distrusts, the static, acquisitive worship of "culture" as against the freedom of the spirit. As Advani insists, Forster's thought, certainly his emotions, have a Neoplatonic tendency: for him, art is a pointer to a reality that transcends the body. In this connection the respective theories held by Clive Bell and Roger Fry are instructive. Dowling's examination of them highlights Bell's positing of an absolute, ideal art, an assertion qualified by Fry's insistence on the necessary inherence of value in concrete manifestations rather than in any abstract postulate. Virginia Woolf's aim as a novelist is here interpreted as an attempt to combine both points of view.

Indeed Dowling's book examines Woolf's novels in terms of her responses (reactionary, corrective and competitive) to the work of Fry and of her sister Vanessa, paying particular attention to her heroic attempt to create novels that would enlarge the painter's ability to arrest time in space by investing the novel's own space and time with a quality of livingness arising from their interaction. There is an enthusiastic and perceptive discussion of the novels, especially illuminating where *Jacob's Room* and *The Years* are concerned; both books benefit from the fresh perspective in which the author places them.

While the contrast between Forster's and Woolf's approaches is well worth demonstrating, Dowling's study is a bit lop-sided. The treatment of Forster's novels is drastically selective (though the account of *The Longest Journey* is selective to good purpose) and the discussion of the musical aspect is a shade too dismissive. At times the style is slipshod, and the author muddles one of Woolf's most celebrated phrases by referring to life as a "semi-transparent halo". Ethel Smyth is confused with Ethel Sands; and, with at least three Bells to choose from, it is not always clear which one is meant. But the account of Woolf's novels more than makes up for these deficiencies.

Neither book ventures far beyond the making of discriminations and corrective definitions. Advani suggests that the best that the critic can hope to do is "to outline a context, clarify ideas, and demonstrate their inter-relationship and relevance". But he seems embarrassed by Forster's belief that "the arts invite response and enjoyment rather than rational analysis and study", pleading as mitigation of such apparent dilettantism his subject's own "subtlety, charm, unusual perception and genuine enthusiasm" when recommending books and authors. For his part Dowling seems content to point out the ways in which each writer agrees with and differs from the other. Yet both Forster and Woolf believed enough in their ideas to become passionate in their defence; they warrant a more searching response than is to be found even in these balanced and sympathetic expositions. No doubt, for better or worse, Leavis would have thought so too.

Echoes

Christopher Hawtree

E.M. FORSTER
The Longest Journey
Edited by Elizabeth Heine
504pp. Edward Arnold. £37.50.
0 7131 6421 2

The Longest Journey was E. M. Forster's second completed novel and, he later claimed, the one he was most glad to have written. In a year that will see the publication of another volume of letters, a new edition of his bibliography, a transcription of his commonplace book and a catalogue of his complete correspondence – as well as David Lean's film of *A Passage to India* – it is welcome that the Abinger Edition should have made its steady progress to this most personal of the novels.

Under the editorship of Elizabeth Heine the series has acquired a more elaborate apparatus, but it is always illuminating and maintains the elegance which Oliver Stallybrass gave to the earlier volumes. (Whether he would have mastered an IBM 3081 in order to collate the texts is another matter.) In this case, Professor Heine's introduction provides an important account of a novel that has not received its critical due. Rather then dwelling on its oddities of construction, she has looked further and emphasized the way in which its echoing texture, which draws motifs from various myths and cultures, forms Forster's most complex exploration of such areas before the Indian novel.

Whether noting joky references to Mrs Keynes and Bertie and to a dove called Parsival or to more weighty matters, the introduction, together with the notes, gives an incisive view of the novel's evolution and allusions. The process can be followed in more detail in a collation of the surviving manuscripts. Momentarily daunting, the system of arrows and brackets is soon mastered and reveals a continual sense of Forster's ease and difficulties. "The preparation room had the peculiar smell that can only be called 'educational'. It cannot be analysed. It is as subtle as a smell in Italy, and more charming." The sentence, with which Forster had tinkered, has a characteristic tone and balance; that the descriptive passage stood better without it is a further indication of his editorial sense. (More startling is the long, deleted fantasy section in which Stephen Wonham – whose name goes through permutations of Lodge, Harold and Podge – wanders naked in the woods.) Sadly, nothing survives to show how Forster arrived at the opening paragraph of chapter five ("Gerald died that afternoon"); similarly, the death of Rickie (originally Gustav) appears to have been difficult, but most details went into an Edwardian waste-paper basket.

Such material has been unobtrusively presented, so the novel can continue to be read for its own sake, but the reader is likely to find himself diverted more frequently than he might have imagined. It is a pity, then, that the volume has been printed on rough paper; when this sort of price has been reached, a pound or two more is neither here nor there.

Body language

David Sexton

PATRICK PARRINDER
James Joyce
262pp. Cambridge University Press.
£20 (paperback, £6.95).
0 521 24014 X

The time has surely come for a moratorium on books called simply *James Joyce*, and for a general agreement to grant that title to Richard Ellmann's biography alone. Patrick Parrinder suggests in his preface that his is a new Joyce: "This book contains several features which have not been usual in introductory critical studies of Joyce" – full reference to both *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*, and more "historical and/or theoretical discussion" of ways of approaching "the Joycean text", as it is dubbed here. It is, however, primarily a guide to the established ways of reading Joyce, a survey of contexts, rather than an original critique. There is little in the way of new material (except perhaps for the suggestion that Joyce found his pseudonym in "*A Modern Daedalus*" (1885), a science-fiction adventure tale in which a young Irishman builds himself wings and heads across the Irish Sea to London"). The book also, as some of its predecessors could not, takes advantage of the publication of the "obscene" letters to Nora (which have clearly influenced Parrinder) and of Ellmann's revision of the biography.

This is an approachable Joyce. Derrida and Lacan are ruled out of court with the observation that it is misleading to suppose they can "provide independent confirmation for Joyce's insights into language, since both thinkers have acknowledged their indebtedness to him". The book makes a straightforward progress through the career, topped by an introduction on "Joyce and the Grotesque" and tailed by a brief "Recourse" to the same theme. The method is paraphrase at some distance, supplemented by something akin to consensus criticism. Parrinder's own assessments tend to be glancing, as is perhaps appropriate in a guide of this type – so it is admitted in passing, for example, that *Exiles* can be considered "a second-rate play", however notable a contribution it made to "Joyce's autobiographical process".

Finnegans Wake is given forty pages of explanation and the "enrichment of life and literary experience it can offer" is mentioned, but Parrinder does not quite make that enrichment look like a good return on the investment of time. *Ulysses* gets twice the space. Parrinder examines it conventionally enough by looking at Stephen, Bloom and Molly as characters (Stephen is seen as a dead end, Bloom as Everyman, and Molly rather severely as the "embodiment of some easily recognizable superstitions about women", not having "stood the test of time as well as Bloom"). The structure detected in *Ulysses* is essentially that of "the odyssey of styles", "a two part performance in which the modern novel is built up and then disintegrated into its original formula" – an approach pioneered by A. Walton Litz, politicized by Colin MacCabe and given book-length treatment by Ruth Lawrence. One of the problems of this reading is that it tends to discount the value of the early chapters, which are used as a norm to be deconstructed. Parrinder counters this by stressing the accomplishment of the "initial style".

He sees the "truth of the ultimate symbol in *Ulysses*" as centred on sexuality, focusing our attention on Joyce's "bottoms-up view". This view is the key to his argument about the grotesque, the most distinctive part of his book: he interprets Joyce's art as grotesque in the same way that Bakhtin did Rabelais's, an art characterized above all by "the grotesque body". Bakhtin presented his Rabelais by suggesting a carnival world in which his discourse made sense. Parrinder, trying to do something similar for Joyce, refers to the sensuality of his art as "rampantly pagan", which does not seem the right term. Joyce's work is, as his brother Stanislaus told him, "undoubtedly Catholic in temperament", a temperament, like Catholic morality, he added, "predominantly sexual". Parrinder's choice of the word "pagan" takes the stress away from Joyce's opposition to Christianity, and leads him into a false emphasis.

Thus Parrinder ends by seeing Joyce's characters as "symbols of human fertility and succession – modern equivalents, perhaps, of the phallic and steatopygous stone images found in the world's great prehistoric temples". The former they may be; the latter surely not.

Drawn into memory

Mansel Stimpson

IRA GRUSHOW
The Imaginary Reminiscences of Sir Max Beerbohm
287pp. Ohio University Press. £27.50.
0 8214 0723 6

In this book certain passages characterized by precision, style and wit stand out; all of them are quotations from the works of Sir Max Beerbohm. Beerbohm's qualities are not merely pleasures in themselves; the perfect clarity of his writing enables the reader to grasp the purpose behind every paragraph. It is the absence of these features in Ira Grushow's text itself that makes this book less telling than it should be. For the author has a worthwhile thesis to expound. Disapproving of earlier assessments which treated Beerbohm's prose and his caricatures separately, Grushow not only links them, but argues that at their finest they represent two manifestations of a single concept.

Regarding this concept, the imaginary reminiscence, as the most personal and mature expression of Beerbohm's art in both disciplines, Professor Grushow names *Seven Men* and *Rossetti and his Circle* as key works. It follows that the uncompleted *The Mirror of the Past* takes on a new significance as a trial run for ideas which, refashioned, found their successful expression in these later publications. In particular the intended appearance of real figures, within a story centred on an invented character, prefigures the blend of memoir and fiction in *Seven Men*.

Grushow is at his best when analysing individual works. Having established the relevance of *The Mirror of the Past*, he studies *Seven Men*, those satirical prose portraits which make up variations on the theme of literary imagination encountering the world of reality. Similar tensions between the artist and society are seen as the essence of the Rossetti drawings. He stresses that the importance of Beerbohm's caricatures lies in what is being said and this is enriched by a further display of the imagination; not, as in *Seven Men*, imaginary persons set off by living ones, including Beerbohm himself, but invented incidents designed to invest a real world with imaginative intensity – "a great moment recaptured, even if it never happened", as *The Times* put it in 1921.

But, while Grushow is good on the individual drawings and persuasive in identifying the whole corpus as a representation of Rossetti as an inspirational force, he is much weaker in his study of the works which preceded and followed those already mentioned – witness the cursory comments on *Zuleika Dobson*. If the thesis is the thing – and if it falls the book has little value – too much is commented upon which is either irrelevant or inadequately related to the context. But, though *Seven Men* and *Rossetti and his Circle* are not shown to reflect the crisis of art in the twentieth century, as Grushow contends, he does convince one of special qualities he claims. Beerbohm, however, had he agreed, would have expressed it better.

The prophet as pest

J. L. Houlden

E. P. SANDERS
Jesus and Judaism
444pp. SCM. £15.
0 334 02091 3
JACOB NEUSNER
Judaism in the Beginning of Christianity
112pp. SPCK. Paperback, £3.95.
0 281 04122 9

E. P. Sanders achieved something of a revolution with *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (1977). He pleased the Jews, educated the Christians and impressed his colleagues in New Testament scholarship by a far-reaching reappraisal of the apostle Paul in relation to the Judaism of his time. Judaism was, in the main, not the grim, "works" religion of conventional Christian portrayal, strong on endeavour and weak on forgiveness, but a warm faith, offering broad security within the covenant; and Paul's creative force came not from a personal anxiety about salvation but from his conviction about Jesus as the accredited emissary of God.

Professor Sanders's recipe was twofold: first, a thorough and candid examination of the Jewish evidence; and second, a determined rejection of the colouring of historical judgment by religious or theological considerations. It seemed to work for Paul. Would it work also for Jesus? On the face of it, there was reason for confidence. A number of recent studies have paved the way for a more workmanlike and sensitive handling of comparative Jewish material than has been possible in the past. And the long trail of accounts of Jesus into which varying religious demands have intruded, while not necessarily giving grounds for assurance, can be taken as a spur to greater objectivity and clearsightedness.

The case of Jesus is, however, fraught with special difficulties. Compared to the direct evidence for Paul to be found in his letters, the material about Jesus – that is almost exclusively the Gospels – is all oblique and complex. It *consists of traditions* about him, worked over in the course of forty to seventy years of early Church life and testifying to religious conflicts and theological convictions in a number of Christian congregations. The interaction of these elements is, in a large number of cases, the subject of intense and legitimate scholarly disagreement. Moreover, the case of Jesus involves not one historical question – about the course of his life – but many. What is required is an account which not only makes him intelligible in his Jewish context, but also shows how his career had the outcome and the effects which we know to have ensued. Any account is liable to fall apart at a number of seams. Jesus was a Jew of his time, yet he was so distinctive that his life had effects such as no other had. He was crucified, yet the alleged reasons for his condemnation are hard to form into a convincing picture, and his followers were allowed to survive as a movement in Jerusalem. Some of his most offensive teachings, as the Gospels present them, do not tally with the attitudes of the earliest Church. What then can we know, and what story can be told that makes sense of the connection between Jesus' teaching, his death and the subsequent life and beliefs of his followers?

In *Jesus and Judaism* Sanders sensibly proposes a hierarchy of truths. Some things are to be known with certainty, other things are probable, others only possible. The bedrock of truth consists in the fact, which few would dispute, that Jesus was a prophet of the restoration of Israel, preaching the kingdom of God. In line with this role, he chose twelve followers as a living symbol of Israel, and he probably had a general expectation that as the kingdom arrived and the restoration took place Gentiles would share in the fulfilment of God's purpose. Sanders sees the sayings of Jesus as mostly too volatile in the process of tradition to be given high rating, but he finds hard fact in Jesus' gesture of violence in the Temple, with which a saying about its coming destruction coheres. Gesture and saying are both consistent with Jewish expectation of the coming crisis, in which a common element was a new God-given Temple. Such a publicly stated doctrine was enough to give rise to the Temple authorities' alarm about Jesus, and plainly it was they who were at the heart of the process which led to his execution.

There were also features of Jesus' teaching which were intensely provocative. One of the most valuable parts of Sanders's work is his careful identification of those features in the light of a clear perception of both Jewish realities at the time and the nature of the Gospel evidence. Much of the latter reflects later Church discussion read back into the life of Jesus, and into this category Sanders places the material (in Mark chiefly) which depicts Jesus as pushing sabbath regulations and food taboos to the margins. Sanders brings much needed clarity to the relative roles of purity (essentially a ritual matter) and sin, and holds that Jesus' offence lay not in calling sinners to repentance (whoever would object to that?), but in summoning them to his banner without the preconditions of repentance and restitution.

So, picking his way through the Gospels in the light of contemporary Judaism, Sanders arrives at a possible picture of Jesus' preaching activity and a plausible explanation of his crucifixion: he was a pest to the Temple authorities and enough of a nuisance for the Romans to be willing to remove him.

The next phase of the story is less easy. Sanders finds it certain that the retention of the Jewish law in the Jerusalem church, evident from Paul's letters, was no reaction but a continuation of Jesus' own teaching. That certainly makes the sequence of things intelligible, even though it is at the cost of the historicity of a major element in Mark, the earliest Gospel, and of a major factor in explaining Jesus' offence against the Jewish authorities. Yet he does admit that there is no sign in the early Church of the continuation of his welcome of the wicked, of his negative attitude to the Temple (apart from Stephen, who is scarcely discussed), or of his one breach of the Law – a crashing one at that – the injunction to a would-be follower, "Let the dead bury their dead" (Matthew 8:21f). If reaction went as far as this, does it not need more examination and may it not have gone even further? It may be that stories of Jesus' negative attitude to the Law do not always look plausible as history, and it is certainly true that in relation to their main points Paul had the battles to fight over again; nevertheless, the theme is as strong as any in Mark's picture of Jesus and its denial is a high price to pay for a smooth picture of continuity into the earliest Church. On any showing, our knowledge is so scanty that to insist that a fully coherent tale be made from the few items we find to be solid is to demand too much. Insistence at this point strains Sanders's logic: "The final proof that [Jesus] accepted the law is the fact that there is only one instance in which following him required transgression of it (Matt. 8:21f)."

The main doubt prompted by this book, however, concerns not so much the story told as the validity of the enterprise. Study of the

One of John Hodder's 64 photographs to be found in Stained Glass Hours: A modern pilgrimage *by Tom Davies (161 pp. New English Library. £12.95. 0 450 06053 5); it illustrates some of the vast collection of relics and statuary to be found in the grotto at Carfin, outside Motherwell, sometimes known as the "Lourdes of Scotland".*

Gospels these days leans to one or other of two approaches. The first tries to see each as a coherent and purposive whole, in terms of literary structure and religious and theological thought. Such an approach maximizes the evangelist's role and is implicitly sceptical and even unconcerned about historical accuracy. No doubt the Gospels contain much good tradition, but the nature of the writing precludes our knowing exactly what it is. Even the facts that command acceptance are subject to variations of interpretation in the Gospels such that their only assured role from our standpoint is in the contexts where we find them. As far as precise history goes, then, the Gospels are chiefly useful as evidence for the thought of the Churches in which they were composed.

The second approach is more optimistic about historicity. The Gospels are highly complex, containing material from many different strata of early Church life, including the earliest, and absorbed into the whole with varied measures of success. It is then possible to dive down for nuggets of truth concerning the deepest level of all, the life of Jesus and its immediate sequel. If these nuggets are consistent with contemporary Jewish life and not obviously derived from later Church ideas, they have a good chance of being authentic. It is an omission that Sanders is so devoted to his own project, a most refined example of nugget-hunting, that he does not consider the claims of the former approach. He is, in essence, a traditional quester after the historical Jesus, but so judicious and so keenly aware of the risk of deception that he allows himself to bring up very few nuggets. Are they not too few to serve for the task which he is so determined to accomplish?

Suppose the claims of the former approach were just, then might not the quest simply have to be abandoned? Of course, if it is to go on, then here is a fine example of it, exposing the faults of predecessors and bringing fresh results. Those faults have stemmed not always from an overmastering desire to find a theologically congenial Jesus. Disarmingly, Sanders offers himself to that test: "I am a liberal, modern, secularized Protestant, brought up in a church dominated by low christology and the social gospel." It is maddening that Sanders's Jesus is not a bad first-century Jewish version of an authority for such a faith.

Jacob Neusner has done more than anyone to apply to the Mishnah and the Talmud, the major Jewish writings of the period after the destruction of the Temple in AD 70, the methods of historical criticism, so long and so meticulously used in relation to the Christian scriptures. *Judaism in the Beginning of Christianity* is a brief introduction to its theme, but it provides a clear and lively account of some of the main expressions of Judaism in the period, especially that of the Pharisees, and a description of the different reactions in Jewish theology to the shock of AD 70 and of the defeat of the later rebellion sixty-five years later.

A chapter on the sources for the life of Hillel, the Pharisaic leader who was an older contemporary of Jesus, makes an interesting comparison with the enterprise represented by E. P. Sanders. Professor Neusner is clear that the material is so overlaid with the concerns of the post-AD 70 period that the authentic voice of Hillel is quite beyond recovery. "I ask myself whether the sources came into being with any such purpose in mind . . . . And, anyhow, what 'critical historical' facts can ever testify to the truth or falsity of salvation, holiness, joy, and love?"

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blown all the village long.

But here comes the vicar with his wild hair,
hauling in his black sails.

ANNE STEVENSON

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ALAN M. G. STEPHENSON
The Rise and Decline of English Modernism:
The Hulsean Lectures 1979–80
340pp. SPCK. £18.
0 281 04124 5

What causes a religious movement to flourish for thirty years, and then suddenly to become eclipsed? Alan M. G. Stephenson asks this question of what he calls the English Modernist movement, which flourished in the Church of England in the 1920s and 30s and whose decline has been so complete that its leaders are largely unknown and their books unread. Its concerns have indeed once more come into prominence through the furore which followed certain remarks made recently by the new Bishop of Durham about the Virgin Birth and the Resurrection of Christ. But unhappily Dr Stephenson died between the writing and the publication of *The Rise and Decline of English Modernism*, so that we do not have the benefit of his comments on this matter.

English Modernism, which is to be quite sharply distinguished from the Roman Catholic movement to which the term "modernism" was first applied in a theological sense, was in the Broad Church tradition of the nineteenth century, and has affinities with Liberal Protestantism on the Continent. With admirable clarity Stephenson has described its essential tenets: doctrine has to be controlled by ethical thinking, it has to accept biblical criticism, to take account of evolutionary theory, to demand high standards of scholarship in clergy training and to allow the articles of the Creed to be broadly interpreted. Frederick Temple's dictum, "If the conclusions are prescribed, the study is precluded", directed its programme. On the positive side it was deeply committed to belief in a personal God, in the uniqueness of Christ and in personal immortality. Contrary to general opinion, it did not preach a social gospel, but was sometimes combined with a mild Erastianism. It was donnish and gentlemanly. Its organs of expression were the Modern Churchman's Union, the magazine *The Modern Churchman* and a series of conferences. All these, having narrowly escaped extinction, now survive in a somewhat different style. It was cruelly parodied by Evelyn Waugh in the character of Prendergast in *Decline and Fall*. Why did so powerful a movement so swiftly lose its identity? Stephenson has provided the reader with enough material to suggest some answers.

First it was dull. Its chief exponents, like H. D. A. Major, were for the most part worthy men, but with not much fire in their bellies or poetry in their veins. Modernist worship was a bore, cerebral and unimaginative. Roman Catholic modernism, on the other hand, with its romantic, indeed tragic history, had a wider and more enduring appeal among liberal-minded High Churchmen, greatly influencing the volume *Essays Catholic and Critical* (*sic*) which appeared in 1928. After the war one could observe liberal churchmen and radical theologians worshipping quite happily in the incense-laden atmosphere of the great Anglo-Catholic shrines of Oxford, London and elsewhere. Then, next, the Modernists were embarrassed by the excesses of some of their own members, most notably E. W. Barnes, Bishop of Birmingham – a brilliant mathematician, but unscholarly as a biblical critic, and tiresomely obsessive in his dislike of Catholic devotion. Thirdly, our attention is called to the inability of the Modernists to come to terms with the newer phase of New Testament criticism (form criticism), associated here with the writings of R. H. Lightfoot, and popularized by D. E. Nineham in his commentary on St Mark. It was anathema to them because it exploded the Liberal Protestant portrait of Jesus, and was consonant either with agnosticism or liberal Catholicism, but not with English Modernism. We are told of some stabs in the back: such eminent divines as C. Hoskyns and W. R. Matthews, as well as Lightfoot, distanced themselves from the movement, because in their view it had become too narrow and paid too little regard to the institutional Church, and to Catholic sacramentalism. Then Stephenson describes the way in which the movement was battered by a number of cross-winds in which it was caught. The neo-Calvinism of Barth, the revival of Thomist theology, the "biblical theology" movement represented by Hoskyns, Dodd and A. M. Ramsey, the liturgical movement, the theological pessimism of Reinhold Neibuhr, the influence of logical positivism and linguistic analysis on English scholars like Ian Ramsey (an earlier Bishop of Durham) – all contributed to the collapse of Modernism. Finally, there came what Stephenson has described as the New Radicalism, an umbrella term to cover several tendencies which, though diverse, have in common the fact of going beyond the questionings of the Modernists to raise radically new issues which horrified those influenced by the earlier movement. *Honest to God*, *The Myth of God Incarnate*, *Taking Leave of God*, *The Sea of Faith* – all these in one way or another put question marks against the three fundamental convictions of the Modernists: the reality of a personal God, the uniqueness of Christ and personal immortality. There is nothing more demoralizing to the liberal than views which outdo him in liberalism.

Perhaps the chief defect of Stephenson's book lies in the rather superficial way in which it deals with the questions which it raises; for example, would it not be more accurate to speak of the triumph rather than the decline of Modernism? A great deal of Modernist thought has now passed into the life-blood of the Church of England. A vivid symbol of this is in the recent uniting into one college of Ripon Hall and Cuddesdon, former strongholds of Modernism and High Church Tractarianism respectively. With what astonishment would one of the earlier Modernists have received a letter headed "Ripon College, Cuddesdon"! The Doctrine Report of 1938, which the Modernists hailed as one of their successes, is in 1985 a key document in the Jenkins debate. Today the use of biblical criticism is routine in all theological colleges. Even as far back as 1938 Dean Inge could write, "The MCU has very little to fight about. Our occupation is gone." Perhaps, then, Dr Stephenson, himself an ex-Modernist, has given too negative an assessment of the movement which nurtured him.

The book does not make easy reading. It is heavy on facts, light on reflections. As a piece of documentation, however, it is masterly. The appendices run to 200 pages. I have spotted only one error: one of Bishop Barnes's books is incorrectly titled (twice) – it was *Should* (not *Can*) *such a Faith Offend?* Perhaps not many will read *The Rise and Decline of English Modernism* from cover to cover; yet no library of twentieth-century religious thought could possibly afford to be without a copy.

Person-to-Person relations

Donald M. MacKinnon

DAVID BROWN
The Divine Trinity
315pp. Duckworth. £24 (paperback, £9.95).
0 7156 1816 4

David Brown's book is a formidable work of theology, written by a man who is rightly aware, as a trained philosopher, of the impoverishment of much contemporary doctrinal discussion by the ignorance of technical philosophy displayed by those who take part in it. His own study, which is rigidly concentrated on the doctrines of the Incarnation and the Trinity, is a splendid illustration of the sort of work to be expected from a man whose scholarly equipment is supported by the sort of philosophical perception that enables him, for instance, to invoke the tradition established by Gilbert Ryle's *The Concept of Mind* in criticizing the use of psychological analogies by St Augustine in his presentation of intra-Trinitarian relations.

The discussion, which suffers to some extent from the author's extreme concentration on certain issues, and his reiterated determination to exclude any treatment of others, is introduced by a long section that seeks to combine an analysis of the content of theism, in contradistinction from deism, with an account of the proper method of theology. The latter is seen to be essentially dialogical, proceeding by an argument that neither disdains tradition nor places itself in bondage to its mere recapitulation. If Dr Brown is rightly impatient of a facile historical relativism, he is also aware that from the beginnings of Christianity there has been continual development in intellectual insight, not only at the cost of bitter disputation, but also of the dangers of future misunderstanding and worse. Thus it is clear that Brown regards the fourth Gospel as the peak of theological understanding in the New Testament period; yet he is honest enough to accuse John of laying the foundations of later antisemitism. Again, in his long discussion of the Holy Spirit, he is not afraid to conclude that, while Paul's experience on the Damascus road enabled him to recognize the Spirit as authentically personal, it also made the early Church's distinction of Spirit and Christ very puzzling to him, and in fact drove him in directions hardly to be reconciled with the memory of Pentecost, whether that experience be understood in the chronology and manner of Luke-Acts, or in those of the fourth Gospel. Further, if Brown's theology of the Incarnation and the Trinity is, in the last resort, orthodox, he recognizes the damage done to the development which reached its term at Chalcedon in 451, by the Platonic conception of divine impassibility; and in the exceptionally valuable study of the Trinitarian controversy between East and West, with which his book ends, he is enabled critically to establish the achievement of the Cappadocian Fathers and to show its congruity, properly restated, with the sort of kenotic Christology he favours.

Brown's method is, in fact, in my judgment, more effectively displayed in the body of his book than in the introductory definition of theism achieved by carefully distinguishing theist from deist. Here the influence of Bishop Butler is strong – his criticism of Matthew Tindal's *Christianity as Old as the Creation* (1739) is given a paradigmatic status. Certainly in this discussion Brown makes a number of valuable points. For instance, it is refreshing to be reminded that much contemporary polemic against the so-called "interventionist" style of traditional theism is blandly oblivious of the discontinuity that must follow any rejection of determinism; the footnote reference to the work of the late Professor C. A. Campbell is entirely apposite. But the model Brown adopts in the end distorts his sensitivity to controversy within the traditions he is opposing one to another. He neglects the sort of interpenetration to which he shows himself so responsive in his actual study of the doctrines of the Incarnation and the Trinity. This neglect leads him, for instance, to the sheer mistake of treating Kant's highly complex philosophy of religion as deistic. This is a mistake unworthy of Brown's concern as a philosopher for the intricacy of conceptual analysis and reconstruction, just as his suggestion that the unknown woman who anointed Jesus according to Mark 14:3–9, and Mary of Bethany, who acted in a similar way according to John 12:1–8, were alike "women of doubtful repute", is unworthy of his scholarship. Whatever may be the case of the woman in the house of Simon the Pharisee (Luke 7:36–50), there is not a scrap of evidence to suggest that the others were "women of the town".

Brown has written a book of such importance in its fundamental conception that one is driven to ask a deeper question. What he has done is to establish a close liaison between the emphasis on the plurality of the Persons in the divine Trinity, characteristic of the Cappadocian Fathers, and a kenotic, even a radically kenotic, understanding of the Incarnation. He is utterly right to stress the importance of an immanent as distinct from a merely economic Trinity. His knowledge of classical and modern theological discussion enables him to dismiss decisively the suggestion that, for instance, John's Christology is "purely functional". If no other New Testament writer equally emphasized the "infinite self-abnegation" of Jesus, the very infinity of that self-abnegation thrusts us towards the transcendent. Trinity and Incarnation, *circumincessio* and kenosis belong together. But is it possible adequately to treat the latter, and by implication the former, as Brown seeks to do, in total abstraction from the doctrine of the work of Christ? When, for instance, Mark in 1:12 speaks of the Spirit as casting Jesus out into the desert, there to be tempted, are we wrong to glimpse a dynamic Trinitarianism below the broken surface of his summary narrative? Brown discusses passages from P. T. Forsyth's *The Person and Place of Jesus Christ* (1946) at some length; but can he do so without acknowledging that Forsyth's emphasis on *kenōsis* and *plerōsis* was part of an enterprise aimed at grounding the doctrine of the Incarnation in soteriological realities? Forsyth is not an infallible guide where theological method is concerned, and his polemic against R. J. Campbell affected his judgment. But does not the admirably disciplined ontological style of argument so effectively marshalled by Brown run the risk of disguising its own profundity by its intense, almost angry abstractness? To write in these terms is to do no more than to address David Brown as a partner in the kind of dialogue on which he so rightly insists valid theological development depends. The dialogue I should wish to enjoy with him would in fact focus on the structure of the very complex concept of kenosis, and it is one in which his very refreshing stress on the significance of religious experience would certainly serve, rather than diminish, the rigour of the conversation.

The International Greek New Testament Project, which originated in 1926, has as its aim to prepare a fully documented edition of the text. The Gospel of Mark was issued in 1935 and the Gospel of Matthew in 1940, both under the editorship of S. C. E. Legg, and under largely British auspices. Since then, the resources for the study have greatly increased and the Project has benefited notably by extensive American participation. Under the successive supervision of G. G. Willis, J. N. Birdsall and J. K. Elliott, work has now resulted in the issuing of *The New Testament in Greek III: The Gospel according to St. Luke, Part One, Chapters 1–12* (229pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press. £55. 0 19 826167 5).

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John Drury

HENNING GRAF REVENTLOW
The Authority of the Bible and the Rise of the Modern World
668pp. SCM. £25.
0 334 01881 1

There used to be, and still survives in conservative theological circles, a hope that the little buckets which biblical critics lower into the well of the sacred past might hit the bottom with an audible clang and hoist up into the present enough historical fact to slake the thirst of those labouring to repair orthodox Christological doctrine under the hot sun of scientific history. The metaphor derives from the first sentence of Thomas Mann's Joseph saga: "Very deep is the well of the past. Should we not call it bottomless?" But Mann's second sentence called the exercise in question: he knew that it could not happen like that. The past is a bottomless well where the life of mankind is concerned. It is an endlessly long perspective, and also an inalienable part of ourselves – both too far and too near for that sort of bucket work to succeed. At the beginning of our century Albert Schweitzer had come to a similar finding at the conclusion of *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*. On the one hand Jesus escapes us into his own past and precedents in first-century Jewish eschatology. On the other hand he is known mysteriously in the present experience of his followers.

This vivid problem, which biblical scholars come upon as they excavate the multiple strata which make the Bible, has a close and correlative neighbour which is intrinsic to biblical criticism itself. It is this: the biblical scholars work with theories and techniques which they believe to be recent until they burrow back and find them already there at the beginning of the nineteenth century in Strauss and F. C Baur, burrow further back via Reimarus and find them in the English Deists at the beginning of the eighteenth century – and begin to wonder where *they* got it all from. In 1903 J. Estlin Carpenter's *The Bible in the Nineteenth Century* started with the Deists. Schweitzer, as a German-speaker, started later with Reimarus. Henning Graf Reventlow's *The Authority of the Bible and the Rise of the Modern World* ends with the Deists, having chosen Erasmus for "the starting point" but led up to him with a chapter on Renaissance humanism and late medieval spirituality as providing the necessary tools and temper. W. G. Kümmel's *The New Testament: The history of the investigation of its problems* (1958) goes back even earlier, but sketchily. So Reventlow makes a major contribution to the important business of raising the domestic historical consciousness of biblical critics. It would, incidentally, save us a lot of clatter of the sort which has greeted the Bishop of Durham's far from unprecedented remarks about the Virgin Birth and the Resurrection if some such consciousness could seep into the Churches. Reventlow deals at large and at length, and with clarity which increases as he gets into his stride, with the first vigorous flowering of biblical criticism in post-revolutionary England. Put his book with Hans Frei's *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative* (1974) – they overlap on the Deists – and we now have two good and recent guides to the literature of that criticism of religion which Marx believed to be fundamental to the whole critical enterprise.

The advantage of Reventlow and Frei over their predecessors is that they see their subject all the time in the context of intellectual history. With Frei it was more the literary aspect; with Reventlow it is more the political. Frei was sustained by the energetic thesis encapsulated in his title: it was German idealistic philosophy that eclipsed the narrative splendours of the Bible. Reventlow writes less *à thèse*, and starts at an earlier phase, but he sustains his contextual method throughout. He knows his way about in English political history and understands the pragmatic moralism of the English religious temperament. The figures whom he successively presents, all lively in themselves and by their concatenation making the structure of his book, are given larger intelligibility by being seen in the changing landscape of thought and politics. A very welcome effect of Reventlow's sense of setting is to counteract a tendency to caricature which distorts the more vulgar Christian treatments of the heroes of criticism, making them into a series of weird heads with very little bodies and hardly any landscape at all. The Deists have suffered from this sort of treatment. They have also been somewhat mauled by other hands. Leslie Stephen's pioneering work on them in his masterly *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century* was disfigured by a disdain for which he made some amends in the *DNB*.

Reventlow sees the Deists' work more as they themselves conceived it: a Christian response to deep and pervasive movements of the mind which had been operating for a very long time and were recognized as profound and positive changes in how it felt to be human in the world – changes for the better too, so that they suffered none of the religious melancholy concerning them which affected Matthew Arnold in the next century. They were genuinely glad that the criteria of understanding were in the process of liberation from effective ecclesiastical control. Milton had argued in 1659 for an interpretation of scripture by the Holy Spirit (which Reventlow traces back to the Anabaptists and Joachim), but with the Spirit "warrantable only to ourselves and such good consciences as we can so perswade". Men like Collins, Toland and Whiston gained their freedom from such mental fighters of the first revolution, and learned cooler criteria from Locke or Newton for understanding both world and texts. Christianity was to keep its place in public intellectual life by coming to terms with confident and independent human rationality: this was their business, carried out in the conviction that mystery and priestcraft, their leading bugbears, were well lost in the cause of hammering out a plain religion conducive to the public and general good. This political conviction was central, and Reventlow is very strong on it. Swift attacked Collins and Whiston for prescribing disorder – a luridly ominous spectre to raise at the time:

> Why should not *William Penn* the quaker, or any *Anabaptist*, *Muggletonian*, *Jew* or *Sweet Singer*, have liberty to come into St Paul's Church, in the midst of Divine Service, and endeavour to convert first the Aldermen, then the Preacher and Singing Men? Or pray, why not poor *Mr Whiston*, who denies the Divinity of Christ, be allowed to come into the Lower House of Convocation and convert the clergy?

But Collins could answer plausibly that it was want of liberty, not its increase, which makes

> convulsions in government, involves neighbourhoods in feuds and animosities, renders men impolite and makes conversations among friends of different sentiments often disagreeable.

Dogma promotes difference and makes it destructive. A visit to the United Provinces, with their exemplary tolerance, would provide practical evidence for Collins's faith in the social beneficence of liberty. Two opposed readings of recent history were at stake. The optimistic humanism of Collins is remarkable in contrast with Swift's pessimism. It strikes a twentieth-century reader as naive, as it struck Leslie Stephen ("a purely optimistic creed always wants any real stamina"). But it at least gives a bounce and freshness to these first encounters with such abiding questions in biblical criticism as historicity and canon, that compares very favourably indeed with most modern treatments of the same questions, which usually look tired and muddled.

Reventlow does justice to the religiously positive, even apologetic, motivation of Deist criticism without being carried away by its eupeptic sprightliness. He rightly regards the work of the Cambridge Platonists, beautifully combining acute distrust of dogma with profound but practical moralism, as a sort of gold standard. Measured by it the Deists are certainly thin and heady, philosophers on whom too much cheerfulness has broken in. But then, they wrote in the shining wake of the glorious and bloodless revolution, the Cambridge Platonists in the turbulent aftermath of the bloody revolution with its larger entail of suffering and guilt. This is a contrast of which Reventlow could have made more. His not doing so is probably the result of his treatment of politics in a predominantly general and theoretical vein. It gives preference to intellectual continuities rather than the disruptions inflicted by shifts at the lower cultural level. Characteristic of this is his treatment of Thomas Chubb. He notices briefly that he was "the man of the people, self-taught", but immediately takes as the interesting thing about him his engagement with "the various themes of the Deistic debate" in highly universal terms.

There is need of much more work on the social matrix of the men Reventlow writes about, an engagement with literacy and the popular attitudes which informed and nurtured it. It is highly significant that most of these men were laymen, unlike their counterparts of these days. Ecclesiastical and social historians are so powerfully and productively at work on lower or basic cultural levels that they must come to claim more attention in future studies of this subject as well. For literary critics too, Reventlow offers cues in the evidence he gives for the vigorous survival of typological and allegorical exegesis, particularly of the Old Testament, in the increasingly historicist and naturalistic climate. Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel* used it. And when Collins discovered allegory in the very historical foundations of Christianity, he was, for all his "tongue in cheek" (Frei), making the kind of point which requires the seasoned skill of a critic like Frank Kermode for its full exploitation.

Reventlow is, therefore, on to a very rich subject; and by treating it within intellectual and political history he opens the way to a still richer contextuality. Simply as a massive commentary and book-list his work will give future investigators a lot of help. The proportion of 400 pages of text to 200 of notes may not look attractive, but it makes for a vast resource for which £25 is a very fair price. Not many books from the religious publishing houses are so solid and so interesting.

Divine indirections

David Crane

PETER S. HAWKINS
The Language of Grace: Flannery O'Connor, Walker Percy, and Iris Murdoch
137pp. Cowley Publications, 980 Memorial Drive, Cambridge, MA 02138. $6.95.
0 936384 07 7

How to speak of the mysteries of the Christian faith in language other than that traditionally and officially set aside for God; and how to judge the degree of success of those who make the attempt. This short study of three novelists, Flannery O'Connor, Walker Percy and Iris Murdoch, sets itself to answer these questions. Peter S. Hawkins is occupied uneasily with a dilemma: for a believer the truths of the Christian religion are the fundamentally important part of human reality, but even though Almighty God succeeded in becoming man without ceasing to be God, it seems well-nigh impossible for Christian doctrine to become a novel without ceasing to be either truly doctrine or truly novel. It is of the nature of transcendental truth that it permits only one kind of direct approach, that by way of doctrine formulated in language to a very considerable extent abstracted from ordinary human experience. All other approaches are by hints and guesses.

The implication throughout this book is that Iris Murdoch, the unbeliever, is the best of the three novelists considered, communicating more powerfully because less explicitly than the two believers some sense of the mysterious and attractive possibilities of explanation outside the realm of mundane human thought. O'Connor is caught

> between the need to state and the desire to suggest: her work exemplifies the seemingly insoluble problems of communication faced by a contemporary Christian writer before an unbelieving audience,

whereas Murdoch's fiction offers

> the strange possibility of a religious discovery that the author has not made for herself, an encounter with the Word she has no intention to speak, but which is perhaps all the more powerful for the author's final silence before the options she has arrayed.

Professor Hawkins takes us interestingly to the point of asking why this should be, but then turns from the question. In the very last lines of his book he compares O'Connor and Percy with Murdoch, and says of Murdoch's *A Word Child*:

> this is indirect communication in the extreme. But the language of grace which it articulates seems to me no less eloquent for its indirection, for the freedom in which the reader is finally left alone, with a choice before a mystery that will not easily give over its burden.

The book ends at the point at which one most wants it to go on.

Alban Butler's *Lives of the Saints* was originally published in four volumes from 1756 to 1759 and quickly established itself as a work of devotion among English Catholics. Two subsequent revisions, completed in 1938 and 1956, helped to bring it up to date but the continuing four-volume format made it cumbersome and difficult of access. A one-volume concise edition has long been needed and is now provided in an attractively produced book edited by Michael Walsh with a foreword by Cardinal Hume (466pp. Burns and Oates. £10.95, paperback £5.95. 0 86012 140 2). The biographies follow the Kalendar from St Peter of Atora on January 1 to St Silvester I on December 31, and the recent canonizations of 1970 are included, though an odd omission is St Thomas More. The book is welcome not only for its devotional content but also as a useful work of reference.

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214pp. 0 7043 2435 0
DAVID CARKEET
Double Negative
246pp. 0 7043 2496 2
Quartet. £7.95 each.
MARGERY ALLINGHAM
Hide My Eyes
219pp. 0 7012 0613 6
The Beckoning Lady
244pp. 0 7012 0614 4
The Hogarth Press. Paperback. £2.95 each.

How pleasant to have an Oxford Professor of Poetry back among the crime-writers, and under his own flag. Classicist and archaeologist as well as poet, Peter Levi displays his reverence for the past in the manner as well as the matter of *Grave Witness*. It belongs firmly in that tradition of exuberantly witty and erudite crime-writing whose roots run back to the 1920s and which flowers most abundantly in the hothouse atmosphere of Oxbridge. Between the soufflé Grand Marnier and the port of the High Table dinner with which the novel opens, we encounter Campbell's *Gertrude of Wyoming*, Hobbes's translation of Thucydides, Wood's *Palmyra in the Desert*, Sir Philip Sidney and the later writings of Henry James before we get a sniff of the plot.

This, when it appears, is centred on the provenance both ancient and modern of a collection of Grecian potsherds allegedly discovered in a sixth century BC grave in Oxfordshire, an event apparently calculated to set the archaeological mind racing with speculation and suspicion. The mind in question belongs to first-person narrator, Ben Jonson, whose heart is simultaneously set pounding by the appearance of a young girl of heavenly beauty called Joy. Together in Oxfordshire, London and the Isle of Wight, they overcome dangers, track down killers, unravel mysteries, and also pick a few flowers along the way.

Typically in books of this genre, the supporting cast tend to have suggestive names and engage by their oddity rather than their humanity: Saintly, Stoup, Frowser, Iggleby fit the bill nicely on both counts, though there are hints enough throughout his characterization to show that Levi will be able to plumb greater depths when he chooses. At present his main problem seems to be his poet's way with narrative, hopping around in a manner which lovers of a good tale well told may find a little irritating. Effective set pieces of rapid action and high excitement occur from time to time, atmospheres are powerfully evoked, no precious stone is left unturned, and there is always something rich and strange to catch the ear or the eye, but on the whole the extremely complex plot is unfolded a little awkwardly.

The thriller writer these days can economize on invention, for the leaking truths of Intelligence work are often so strange, squalid and absurd that fiction needs only to give them a local habitation and a human shape. This Alan Furst does triumphantly in *Shadow Trade*, whose hero, Guyer, an ex-CIA agent made redundant by the micro-chip and also the irrational hatred of a superior who sees his compassion as weakness, has started a private intelligence agency to utilize the only skills he possesses.

Shadow Trade succeeds on two levels. It offers a detailed, gripping and convincing picture of the techniques, psychological and technological, of the secret world; and it involves us in the motives and behaviour of all those whom the shadow of that world touches. At the centre of the novel is the idea that everyone in the world has a double, usually traceable through computer technology and, once discovered, usable in ways only limited by the imagination and the ethics of the scenario writer. Out of this Furst spins a compelling and original plot without any escapist pyrotechnics. His shadow world is always on the borders of the daylight world we live in. At the end of the book, one is surprised to realize how widely the scope of its action has ranged – from Vietnam to South America – but its feet are firmly planted in a New York which television and the cinema have made as familiar to most of us as our local shopping precinct. *Shadow Trade* is intelligent, honest, gripping, and not much for our comfort.

David Carkeet's *Double Negative* is a real treat for those who have tended to regard linguisticians as locusts in the lush meadows of Eng Lit. Here they abound, doubly perfect in that they are (a) mainly unsympathetic and (b) extremely entertaining. The setting of this highly original story is the Wabash Institute for research into the way children develop speech. The main character, Dr Jeremy Cook, is not amused when the body of a colleague turns up in his office and he enters into a rather one-sided coalition with a very odd police lieutenant to solve the crime. *En route* to the ingenious solution, there is another killing, any amount of fun with language at all levels from infant to adult. Carkeet displays wit, invention and a good sense of narrative shape and pace. *Double Negative* is his first detective novel; if this means that it's his first novel of any kind, then it is a most mature début.

Hogarth Crime continues its excellent reprint series with two novels from Margery Allingham's later, more interesting post-war period. This pair are nicely contrasted in many ways. *Hide My Eyes* is set in London, mainly at its sleazier twilit level. *The Beckoning Lady* is set in Suffolk, principally at the well-heeled middle-class end. *Hide My Eyes* explores the psychology of a killer and makes the reader face up to the implications of his crimes; *The Beckoning Lady* is much jollier and full of rustic quips, cranks and wanton wiles. Both feature Albert Campion, who improved much with age, and both display those skills of plotting and elegances of style which encompass the whole range of Margery Allingham's writing.

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Criminal proceedings

T. J. Binyon

TONY HILLERMAN
Dance Hall of the Dead
166pp. Pluto Press. £7.95.
0 86104 693 5

This is the first of Tony Hillerman's ethnographical crime novels, set in the Indian reservations of the American West. A young Zuni Indian fire god disappears, and is later found murdered. Lieutenant Joe Leophorn, a Navajo, tracks the killer through a complex narrative involving archaeology, narcotics smuggling and Zuni religious customs. A good deal of out-of-doors action, a well-thought-out and executed plot, all set against a stunningly effective background.

TIMOTHY HOLME
The Assisi Murders
190pp. Macmillan. £7.50.
0 333 38493 8

Achille Peroni, the Rudolph Valentino of the Venetian police, while recovering from an injury sustained in the course of duty, is persuaded by his sister to join her in a pilgrimage to Assisi. There he involves himself, strictly unofficially, in a murder inquiry which turns out to have its roots buried in the past, in 1230, to be exact, when the ashes of St Francis were interned in the great new basilica built in his honour. An extremely cunning plot, which weaves the medieval and the modern into a seamless narrative, set against a beautifully observed and described Italian background, populated with some lustily eccentric characters.

JONATHAN GASH
Pearlhanger
197pp. Collins. £7.50.
0 00 231956 X

Lecherous Lovejoy, the East Anglian antique dealer with an infallible nose for the genuine article, is hired by an attractive blonde to look for her husband, a dealer who's vanished while trawling through the district for family heirlooms. As usual the plot is murkily impenetrable, but redeemed by the sheer energy of the narrative, with Lovejoy spouting antique lore by the yard and getting off with anyone wearing a skirt who comes within pouncing distance. And it's good to have him back on his native heath: Lovejoy abroad is never quite the genuine article.

SIMON BRETT
A Box of Tricks
231pp. Gollancz. £8.95.
0 575 03585 4

The title of this collection of twelve short stories is certainly an appropriate one: elegantly and wittily written, they are enthrallingly tricky and each has the sting in the tail that the [illegible] tone ranges from the hor[illegible] to the broadly comic – murder at a Fancy Dress Party given by a practical joke firm. And, to conclude, there's a Charles Paris story for all his friends and admirers to enjoy.

DOROTHY SIMPSON
Last Seen Alive
220pp. Michael Joseph. £8.95.
0 7181 2520 7

Strangled woman discovered in bedroom of the Black Swan, Sturrendon's oldest and smartest hotel. Murder is investigated by Dorothy Simpson's usual pair of Kent detectives, Inspector Thanet and Sergeant Lineham. Well organized and soberly written, with a cunningly contrived plot and some interesting characters.

ROGER ORMEROD
Dead Ringer
188pp. Constable. £7.50.
0 09 466120 0

Former stunt man Jerry Boyes, who retired after losing a foot in a stunt that didn't quite work out, is asked by an old friend to act as middleman in handing over the ransom for a kidnapped businessman. But, of course, matters are not what they seem, and Jerry finds himself involved in some dangerous shenanigans before he sorts matters out. Bordering on the humdrum, but rescued by some ingenious twists and turns in the plot, and by Jerry's pleasingly unassuming way of life.

RICHARD BARTH
One Dollar Death
220pp. Gollancz. £8.95.
0 575 03505 6

Margaret Binton organizes her gang of New York senior citizens and drop-outs for their third investigation after a friend of hers is stabbed to death in the offices of Sotheby Parke Bernet, where she had gone to have a coin valued. It's always pleasant to see the amateurs whipping the professionals, and the pleasure is compounded when the amateurs are all well past the age of retirement. Neat but not gaudy plot, with scads of numismatic information on old American coins.

JOHN MALCOLM
The Godwin Sideboard
16pp. Collins. £6.95.
0 00 231961 6

This is John Malcolm's second novel with investment specialist Tim Simpson as its hero, and it's just what a second novel should be: more solid, more professional, and at the same time preserving the zest and energy of its predecessor. It opens with the death of Peter Blackwell, an antique dealer who's been on the track of a sideboard designed by E. W. Godwin, once a lover of the actress Ellen Terry; from here the plot winds its way forward through a thicket of antique furniture and a good deal of information thereon to an exciting and emotional climax. There aren't going to be many better second novels this year.

Paperbacks

Architecture

David Watkin. *Morality and Architecture: The development of a theme in architectural history and theory from the Gothic Revolution to the Modern Movement*. 126pp. University of Chicago Press. £5.90. 0 226 87487 7.☐ The expanded version of a lecture David Watkin gave in Cambridge in 1968, *Morality and Architecture* was first published in 1977 and reviewed by Reyner Banham in the *TLS* of February 17, 1978. The reissue of this book is well calculated, in a time when public prejudice against the Modern Movement is finding more influential voices, for its theme is the historicist tendency in architectural thought. Its three parts trace the establishment of this tendency in the work of Pugin and Viollet-le-Duc; the twentieth-century development of it by W. R. Lethaby, Bruno Taut, Herbert Read, J. M. Richards, Sigfried Giedion and the "vulgar sociology" of Robert Furneaux Jordan's *Victorian Architecture*; and the career of Nikolaus Pevsner, the dominant interpreter in the modern period of architectural history according to the moral demands and shapings of the *Zeitgeist*, and the leading champion of Modernist design. The arguing is pretty rough and partial, feeding on and fuelling prejudices as marked as the convictions of its central protagonist, Pevsner himself. On Pevsner and his influence vast and scholarly work – rather than the slender polemic of this book – should be done.

Biography and memoirs

Janet Adam Smith. *John Buchan: A biography*. 524pp. Oxford University Press. £4.95. 0 19 281866 X. ☐ Janet Adam Smith's detailed and affectionately composed biography of John Buchan was first published in 1965 (and reviewed in the *TLS* of September 16 that year), and is now reprinted unchanged except for a brief new preface. The author's well-illustrated *John Buchan and his World* (1979) sharpened some earlier judgments and published a few additional documents, some relating to Buchan's career in Milner's Kindergarten, but for the reprint of the main biography Miss Adam Smith has found nothing needing adjustment. The puzzles and complexities of Buchan's career are admitted – "He bothers critics, many of whom are uneasy at the variety of his achievement yet irritated that the achievement was not greater". She does not claim to unravel all the puzzles, but the evidence on which reassessment can be based is fully and candidly set out, covering Buchan's literary career particularly well and dealing with the Canadian governor-generalship at the end of his life with a sense of surprise at its achievement and at the personal affection it inspired.

Dennis Holman. *Noone of the Ulu*. 253pp. Oxford University Press. £10.95. 0 19 582610 8.☐ First published in 1958, and reviewed in the *TLS* of September 19 that year, *Noone of the Ulu* is a bizarre delight. The book starts in a risibly *Boy's Own Paper* style, then offers a journeyman account of Pat Noone's remarkable anthropological work among the Temiar, at length becoming breathlessly excited about Richard Noone's role amongst the Malayan aborigines during the Emergency – it is at this point that men leaving helicopters are described as quitting "the quivering thorax of the dragonfly". But the story triumphs over the presentation. Pat Noone is the quintessence of the self-confident bright Britons who plunged so avidly into native life; his work on the dream-culture of the Temiar was outstanding. But then came the war, Noone's guerrilla work with the communists, his disappearance and finally the Emergency. Tragically, the Temiar, whom Pat Noone believed to be the last truly happy people, were sucked into both a propaganda and a shooting war between the SAS and the Communists. Inevitably, their idyll was corrupted. That the agent of their corruption should be Noone's younger brother is particularly poignant. A brutally frank introduction by Field Marshal Sir Gerald Templer sets the scene perfectly. The subtext is redolent with colonial attitudes, the photographs a revelation. The telling is atrocious, the story riveting – and who cannot warm to a book which contains the sentence "Later he went to Pong, a journey of nine leech infested miles"?

Drama

Four Tudor Comedies. Edited by William Tydeman. Penguin. £3.95. 0 14 043 2027. *Three Sixteenth-Century Comedies*. Edited by Charles W. Whitworth, Jr. The New Mermaids. Ernest Benn. £4.95. 0 510 33509 8. ☐ These are both useful editions. The Penguin contains four plays to the New Mermaid's three, but that does not necessarily make it better value. The plays chosen to complement *Grammer Gurton's Needle* and *Ralph Roister Doister* in the Penguin – *Jack Juggler* and *Mother Bombie* – are rather hard going, but the third play in the New Mermaid – *The Old Wive's Tale* – is a much-neglected Elizabethan comedy which performs brilliantly. Tydeman focuses on plays which show the influence of Plautus and Terence, while Whitworth emphasizes the diversity of comedy in the period. So *Grammer Gurton's Needle* and *Ralph Roister Doister* are treated in one edition as similar and in the other as different – no bad thing, for the rhetorical tradition the writers of these plays inherited required similar things to be said in different ways. Both editions have informative introductions. Tydeman gives a fuller account of the development of English comedy. Whitworth dwells too much on vexed questions of authorship, but his section on staging is very useful. Neither editor is enthusiastic about the tumbling "fourteeners", but the effectiveness of the verse can only really be demonstrated by reading aloud. The text is laid out better in the New Mermaid. Since the speech-headings are placed above them, most of the long lines can be fitted in without run-on. I also prefer the headings "Madge" and "Merrygreek" (New Mermaid) to "M. Mumb [1]" and "M. M. [ery]" (Penguin, following original). In both, the useful notes skirt carefully round the outspoken language of the original. With the new insight that Hodge's change of trousers is essential to the dénouement, Tydeman observes "I suspect that this is why the dramatist was at pains to have him foul his original pair", and Whitworth says "the grossness is not entirely gratuitous; it provides Hodge with a compelling reason for changing to his other pair of trousers". Neither admits that our ancestors laughed at the bursting of Hodge's "arse-strings".

History

Donald Earl. *The Moral and Political Tradition of Rome*. 167pp. Thames and Hudson. £5.95. 0 500 27344 8. ☐ Roman historians are notable rather for the excellence of their prose style than for any special penetration into the springs of men's actions. Far from groping after the daylight of law, they wallow unrepentantly in the mire and darkness of ultra-conservative prejudice, a prejudice which has its own history, here brilliantly and sympathetically recreated by Professor Earl. It was the cult of *virtus* – literally "manliness", but really the sum of one's own *gloria* (won on the battlefield and in the law-courts) and that of one's illustrious ancestors (a quantity discounted by the "new men") – which drove the many sons of noble families to scramble after the handful of magistracies in the gift of the Roman people. The price of equilibrium was misgovernment, the penalty for any imbalance between the opposing forces bloody civil war. No wonder, then, that the Augustan poets play down the dependence of *virtus* on *gloria* in favour of the virtues of loyalty and co-operation, and that later, when the very existence of the empire was threatened, the ideal that had been embodied in a few tens of families came to be vested in the person of the Emperor alone. *The Moral and Political Tradition of Rome* was first published in 1967 and reviewed in the *TLS* of September 28 that year.

Johan Huizinga. *Men and Ideas: History, the Middle Ages, the Renaissance*. Translated by J. S. Holmes and H. van Marle. 378pp. Princeton University Press. £9.10. 0 691 05422 3. ☐ The University of Leiden has produced many distinguished historians. One of the greatest of these was Johan Huizinga, Professor of History and Historical Geography whose Inaugural Lecture, "Historical Ideals of Life", read on January 27, 1915, forms one essay in this collection. When the Nazis closed the University in 1942, Huizinga was sent into exile near Arnhem, close to the Front Line where, deprived of books and students, he died in February 1945 before the liberation of Holland. These essays, first translated in 1959 (and reviewed in the *TLS* of December 16, 1960) are once again available in paperback. They reflect the theme of the central piece and key essay entitled "The Task of Cultural History" and include biographical studies of John of Salisbury, Joan of Arc, Abelard, Alain de Lille, Grotius and above all, Erasmus of Rotterdam. They take up and develop themes from his most famous work *The Waning of the Middle Ages* (1924). They remain remarkably fresh and the clear translation is eminently readable. In his work, Huizinga was able to combine the intellectual and philosophical approach of his contemporaries to History with an insight into the psychological, sociological and anthropological approaches more common today. In addition, his empathetical relationship with his subjects reproduced that combination of spirituality and chivalry which he himself saw in John of Salisbury, Abelard and Abbot Suger of Saint Denis when he comments that they were always "satisfyingly human and merry".

Literature

W. Somerset Maugham. *On a Chinese Screen*. 237pp. Oxford University Press. £3.95. 0 19 583863 7.☐ H. J. Lethbridge, the anthropologist, in his introduction to this reissue of *On a Chinese Screen* (first published in 1922 and reviewed in the *TLS* of November 23 that year) states unequivocally that Maugham's work is inferior to that of Conrad and Kipling. It may be true that Maugham wrote without the spontaneity of these two, nor did he aim to. He described himself as a "made" writer, and knew his limitations. Craft and technique were his forte; a cool detached presentation of character and a crisp narrative flow were his style. *On a Chinese Screen* is a collection of fifty-eight vignettes, portraits and evocations; time capsules from a world that has vanished within living memory, the world of China in 1921. Scholars and rogues, officials, mystics and missionaries process across the pages (which, incidentally, are printed in the original typeface). There are recognizable prototypes for characters in the subsequent novels and stories, such as the "struck off" doctor from *The Narrow Corner*. The various, highly successful sketches of bland and bigoted missionaries were to crystallize some years later in the incomparable short story "Rain": "The Taipan" is the most satisfying chapter of *On a Chinese Screen*, in that it is a complete short story. A particularly funny vignette is "The Missionary Lady" who talks in wonderful platitudes, egged on by the author whose sense of humour, one is reminded, should not be overlooked.

Reviews by: Alan Bell, Brenda Bolton, Alan Hollinghurst, Jonathan Hope, David Jenkins, Keith McCulloch, Paula Neuss.

Also in paperback

Alan Bullock. *Ernest Bevin: Foreign Secretary 1945–1951*. 896pp. Oxford University Press. £12.50. 0 19 281852 X.☐ First published in 1983. Reviewed in the *TLS* of November 11 that year.

Alistair Fox. *Thomas More: History and Providence*. 271pp. Blackwell. £7.50. 0 631 14168 5.☐ First published in 1982. Reviewed in the *TLS* of February 25, 1983.

Gertrude Himmelfarb. *The Idea of Poverty: England in the early industrial age*. 595pp. Faber. £11.50. 0 571 13388 6.☐ First published in 1984. Reviewed in the *TLS* of May 25 that year.

Robert Lowell. *Life Studies*. 104pp. Faber. £2.95. 0 571 09921 1.☐ First published in 1959. Reviewed in the *TLS* of October 14, 1960. *Near the Ocean*. 55pp. Faber. 0 571 13545 5.☐ First published in 1967. Reviewed in the *TLS* of August 3 that year. *For the Union Dead*. 72pp. Faber. £2.95. 0 571 13544 7.☐ First published in 1965. Reviewed in the *TLS* of July 1 that year.

Edward Lucie-Smith (Editor). *British Poetry since 1945*. Revised edition. 423pp. Penguin. £3.95. 0 14 042332 X.☐ First published in 1970. Reviewed in the *TLS* of October 9 that year.

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Two new studies, "Devotional Literacy" and "Lollards and Images", form the core of *Lollards and Reformers: Images and literacy in late medieval religion*, an attractive and coherent collection of essays by Margaret Aston (355pp. Hambledon Press. £20. 0 907628 03 6). She expounds, with characteristic lucidity, forcefulness and perceptiveness, some of the motives for the acquisition of literacy as well as many of literacy's manifestations and consequences in late medieval England. Lollard attitudes towards images in relation to contemporary use of them are sensitively and convincingly delineated. These two essays expand themes and issues touched on in the other eight chapters of the book, all of them, save the last two primarily historiographical essays, concerned with aspects of Lollardy. The book is one of the most recent in the series of well-produced and intelligently planned collections of articles in the History Series from the enterprising Hambledon Press. Both author and publisher are to be congratulated.

R.McK.

Also in the Hambledon Press's History Series is H. E. J. Cowdrey's *Popes, Monks and Crusaders* (358pp. £24. 0 907628 34 6).